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THE  
LORD'S PRAYER.

Discourses

*DELIVERED IN THE PARISH CHURCH,  
S. GILES-IN-THE-FIELDS.*

BY

NEVISON LORAINÉ,

VICAR OF GROVE PARK—WEST, LONDON;  
AUTHOR OF "THE SCEPTIC'S CREED," "THE CHURCH AND  
LIBERTIES OF ENGLAND," ETC.

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SMITH, ELDER, & CO., 15 WATERLOO PLACE.  
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THIS VOLUME  
IS  
**Inscribed,**  
WITH DEEP REVERENCE AND AFFECTION,  
TO  
MY MOTHER.

N. L.



## PREFACE

*TO SECOND EDITION.*



THE following series of expository discourses were delivered as Sunday-afternoon Lectures in the Parish Church of S. Giles-in-the-Fields, and published during my first year in holy orders. The book has been out of print for many years; but I have hitherto declined to republish it, being deeply sensible of the imperfections of a volume produced, as it was, during my early diaconate, and amid the varied occupations of a curacy which commanded, even in a special manner, sympathy and work. Now, however, at the request of friends,

both known and unknown, and under the encouragement of their judgment, I again commit these Lectures to the press, with the humble hope that they may prove of some service in helping to a better understanding and more hearty use of that wonderful prayer, which is the Divinely authorised form and pattern of Christian devotion.

NEVISON LORAINÉ.

THE VICARAGE, GROVE PARK—WEST,  
LONDON, 1880.

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THE LORD'S PRAYER.





# THE LORD'S PRAYER.



## INTRODUCTORY.

*"After this manner therefore pray ye."*—MATT. vi. 9.

THE frequency with which "the Lord's Prayer" occurs in the Offices of the Church of England renders it a matter of special importance that all who use the forms of our National Liturgy, should earnestly endeavour to understand this oft-repeated prayer, which is the first form and constant model of Christian devotion. But, further, since there are few parents in all Christendom, who at morn and even teach their children to raise their tender thoughts towards the great Father of all, that do not stamp this prayer amid the first impressions of memory,—since there are few household altars whence this "Our Father" does not ascend with united voice to God,—since, indeed, as it is the common model, so it has

become the common prayer, the duty of endeavouring to grasp the meaning of its comprehensive petitions is both wide and deep.

But familiarity may beget formality. The words may be often on the tongue, while the life within has never awoke, either in feeling or in thought, to the use of this great gift of God. For it is possible to repeat the petitions often, and yet never offer the prayer ; to be in daily use of the words, while an utter stranger to their significance and spirit. Then, indeed, the Lord's Prayer is profaned, not used ; its employment is a mockery of devotion. But offered "with the spirit and with the understanding also," it gives a higher key to all our worship ; it raises the soul into closer union with "Our Father which art in Heaven" — "the one God and Father of all ;" and knits in fraternal fellowship the whole human brotherhood.

Yet how many there are who regularly use this prayer, making it their daily offering to the Eternal Majesty of Heaven, that have never spent one hour in earnest effort to grasp the meaning of its sacred words ! Some of you learned it—you know not when. It came to you insensibly, as your native tongue, or, at most, your first recollections of it stand faintly amid the dim remembrances of early childhood, hallowed, peradventure, by the memory of a departed

mother's voice. From then until now, day by day, it has been upon your lips. Long, eventful years have come and gone—days of sorrow and of joy—and as amid the unfolding lights of morning, and the deepening shadows of the dying day, in the most solemn and sublime attitude of which man or angel is capable, the attitude of worship, you still use these holy words, teaching children and children's children to say, "Our Father,"—permit me to ask you severally, Have you duly considered what these words of the Lord Jesus signify? Have you a distinct and definite apprehension of the import of these several petitions? If not, in using them, are you not guilty of the "vain repetitions" of the heathen—a mere formal recital of unmeant phrases?

Mothers regularly teach their children to repeat the words of the Lord's Prayer; but how seldom, with equal, much less with superior care, do they endeavour to open up the rich and blessed meaning of its several petitions to the young mind, and thus to awaken a truer spirit of devotion! "I will pray," says St. Paul, "with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also" (1 Cor. xiv. 15).

The Lord Jesus, in His great discourse, previously to prescribing His common form and model of prayer, gives warning of two chief dangers that beset devo-

tion; and to these, with some other preliminary subjects, we propose first to direct attention before entering upon the consideration of the several petitions of the Christian's pattern prayer.

*"After this manner therefore pray ye."* When the Evil One cannot prevent, he endeavours to pervert prayer. The Lord Jesus warns His disciples against two current dangers to which prayer is more particularly exposed. These two mischievous perversions of prayer appeared specially in the times in which our Lord spake His words of warning,—in the Pharisaism of the Jew, and in the heathenism of the Gentile; but these evils work still. They are not confined to any age or nation, but beset with dangerous subtlety the men of all times and the worship of all peoples.

The *first* is *Pharisaism, or externalism in prayer*. "When thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men." It is of the nature of true religion to win confidence and respect for its possessor. Not unfrequently base-minded men, utterly destitute of the inward power of the truth, have assumed its outward form, to serve their own selfish and sordid purposes. This is no disparagement to religion, but the contrary. Anything that is excellent is certain to be imitated by

something that is spurious. The counterfeit coin presupposes the currency of the true mintage. Christianity, therefore, as the highest excellence, giving to its disciples the noblest principles of human living, has been but too often professed by those who "for a pretence make long prayers," desiring only "that they may be seen of men."

He who spake the beatitudes seldom spake aught but blessings ; yet as He went about among men, His eye looking into the depths of human life, unmasking simulation and unreality, His spirit was moved within Him, and He denounced—"Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites."

The motive that actuated the worship of the Pharisee was the "praise of men," hence he chose to stand "in the synagogues"—the places of public assembly—and at "the corners of the streets"—the places where two or more ways meet—that thus his devotions might be performed where there was the greatest conflux of witnesses. The ancient Jews had appointed times of prayer, and were wont, like the more strict modern Jews and Mohammedans, to keep these particular hours most carefully. The Pharisee turned this fact to his own account ; arranging that he should be overtaken by the prayer-hour in some busy place, that then his devotions might be seen of men.

But what has this ancient habit to do with us in modern times? Christians have no such customs. Pharisaism is long since dead. Nay, verily, Pharisaism is not dead. The sect so designated no longer flourishes; but that principle in our common nature which generated Pharisaism, lives still. Was not Pharisaism merely the bold and somewhat coarse expression of a deep-lying tendency in the human soul?—a disposition to make religion merely a matter of outward life, to rest satisfied with forms and observances?

The spiritual is foreign to man; he reaches it with difficulty; he continues in it only by watchfulness, by self-conquest, by reliance on a power that is higher than his own; whilst the mere circumstantial of religion, that can be seen, spoken, handled, may be easily dealt with. Thus the corrupt heart learns to defraud itself,—forgetting the substance in the shadow,—forgetting God, the hallowed secrecy of spiritual communion, the yearning of the inward life after its true good and its eternal rest; and remains self-contented with an orderly observance of the outward duties of the Church, an attentive regard to its holy days, and the repetition of its solemn prayers, whilst the affections remain unmoved, and the spirit's inmost deeps feel no throb of heavenly

life. So Pharisaism spreads and grows in the human soul.

Brethren, have you not often found that your religious exercises have been influenced rather by the thought of man's presence than of God's presence? by the observation of human eyes, rather than by the solemn consciousness that "Thou God seest me"? Have not your observance of the holy day of rest,—the soul's Sabbath,—and your periodical repetition of those noble words of prayer in which we join from time to time, been actuated by a habit that the customs of society have imposed upon you, rather than by any devout love of this high day, or any spiritual appreciation and use of those hallowed services? Have you not practically regarded the observance of the Lord's Day, it may be almost unconsciously, rather as a social than a spiritual occupation? And have you not rested satisfied with the stated repetition of these prayers, while thoughts of earth and time have been more present than thoughts of God and eternity? What is all this but essential Pharisaism—modernised Pharisaism? Is it not the operation of the same principle—differing somewhat in its form of development in different ages, yet still the same—against which our Lord urged with such impressiveness His warning, "When

thou prayest, enter into thy closet,"—"pray to thy Father which seeth in secret"? "What then," as S. Augustine suggests, "it may be said, ought we not to pray in the church? Indeed we ought, by all means; but everywhere God seeks the intention of all that is done. Since even if thou shouldest enter into thy closet, and having shut thy door, shouldest do it for display, the doors will do thee no good."

"Enter into thy closet,"—but remember there is a deeper meaning to these words of the Lord Christ, than that thou shouldest enter into some private chamber or secret place for prayer. It is that in thy devotions thy soul must be *closeted* with God. The intrusive foot of distracting thoughts must be excluded. Thou must shut up thy spirit alone with Him who is invisible. The private chamber is no closet, if, while men are shut out, a thousand worldly thoughts come in to disturb the solemnity, to distract the mind, to interpose between the soul and God. But the streets of the city, or the quiet fields at eventide, may be the closet of devotion; in which a busy life may find secret moments of private communing with "the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort" (2 Cor. i. 3).

In *private* prayer, "enter into thy closet,"—shut out the world,—in rapt forgetfulness of all beside;



let thy prayers be the secret communion of thy soul with God, and "thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly," by purifying thy heart and ennobling thy whole character, and sending thee out into the common walks of daily life a better, truer, kinder, holier man, and thus day by day fitting thee for the higher walks and brighter fellowship of another life, when He will complete His promise, and reward thee yet more "openly" in the "great day," by giving thee that heritage of which His earthly blessings are but a figure—"evidence of things not seen" (Heb. xi. 1).

In *public* prayer, "enter into thy closet and pray to thy Father in secret," by feeling thy soul individually alone with God, while yet in the agreement of common prayer with "the great congregation," using those holy litanies that thy fathers have used, and in the assemblies of the saints thou shalt share the blessings that descend upon a united people's devotions. No longer shall the solemnities of the sanctuary be esteemed a formal service, but thou wilt go "to the house of God with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that keep holy day" (Ps. xlii. 4); and with the thankful fervour of a living experience thou shalt join in the exclamation, "How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul

longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God" (Ps. lxxxiv. 1, 2).

The *second* warning is against *heathenism, or self-trust in prayer*. "When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathens do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking."

The meaning of the word (*βαρτολογέω*), here rendered "much speaking," has provoked considerable discussion. It is said to be derived from one Battus, a Cyrenian king, of whom one of the Greek historians says that he was a stammerer; and others mention Battus as a foolish hymn-maker, whose silly repetitions made him a byword for meaningless tautology. Our Lord evidently used the word to discredit the silly, because meaningless, repetitions of the heathen in their prayers, and to warn the Christians against any approach to a similar error.

"Superstition," says Olshausen, "ascribes the reason for the granting of its prayer, not to the mercy of God, but to its own godless work." What an illustration of this fact does all heathenism afford! From the time when the worshippers of Baalim grouped upon Carmel, and invoked their gods from morning till evening with the oft-repeated

cry, "O Baal, hear us!" cutting themselves with knives, even to this day, when the devotees of Hindoo superstitions for hours mutter the sacred name, "*Om*," and the Dervishes of Persia shout the sacred "*Alla*" until they faint or fall, in every age superstition is, in spirit, still the same.

Is there not, at least, the germ of a similar tendency in us, a semi-heathenism inherent in every man, which often intrudes its false "Thou shalt be heard for thy much speaking"? How often do men rest satisfied with a certain number of petitions repeated in private, or a given time occupied in public worship, and in doing this imagine the claims of devotion to be fully satisfied? There is that in the human heart which induces man to be content with long-continued or oft-repeated prayer, to think that the essence of prayer lies in "much speaking,"—an innate heathenism which obscures the blessed truth, "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him."

My brethren, words are the mere accidents of prayer. Prayer is essentially the heart's work. So far, therefore, as words are concerned, prayers may be in many words or few: sometimes, indeed, they may be without words. The publican's prayer was very brief, yet how effectual! Our Lord Jesus

spent whole nights in prayer in some lone place apart.

But though words are only a secondary part of prayer, yet they are important. In private devotion, they give steadiness and purpose to the thought. In public worship, they are necessary to the unity of the prayer; that the mind of the congregation may be concentrated on a common object, that as with the heart of one man the people may wrestle with God, that *one* cloud of devotion may ascend up before Him, to be mingled and made fragrant with "the incense that is in the golden censer in the mediatorial angel's hand" (Rev. viii. 3).

In order to this agreement in private, as well as unity in public worship, our great Teacher says, "After this manner therefore pray ye," giving us at the same time not only a general model, but a particular form of prayer; so that, in our common worship, all Christian men, of every varied clime, age, and sentiment, become one in the universal use of this *Pater noster*.

For the public service of God in "the great congregation" we recognise the value of an approved liturgical form, that there may be an agreement in the mind and unity in the petitions of the worshippers, and that they may come to "*their* holy

and *their* beautiful house where their fathers praised God," for "common prayer," expecting the fulfilment of His words, who said, "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven" (Matt. xviii. 19).

The value and importance of a recognised liturgy are being increasingly acknowledged by various denominations of Christians, who are introducing such prescribed forms into their public services. Let us, then, be thankful for that noble Liturgy of the Church of England, breathed this day, with one consent, by ten thousand congregations, hallowed by the sanction of centuries; some of its noblest prayers never, day by day, having failed from the lips of the Church, through all her vicissitudes, from her infant age up to the present hour. Let us endeavour to use these holy words with a more devout and earnest spirit: otherwise, indeed, noble as they are, and precious as they have been to many generations, they will become to us a mere "vain repetition;" but if the "spirit" and the "understanding" consent to these petitions, and echo these responses, they will reach the heaven of heavens, and move the omnipotent love of the God of our fathers.

But is not the frequent recurrence of the same phrases just those "vain repetitions" against which the great Teacher warned His disciples? Surely not. They are *repetitions*, but not, therefore, *vain*. Any petition, if not offered from the heart, is "vain;" but if it be the real language of the soul, the true expression of its conscious need, the frequency of the utterance cannot destroy the reality of the prayer, rendering it "a vain repetition." Rather, indeed, it discovers how one great want has taken possession of the soul,—how desperate the purpose this inward consciousness has created to have its need supplied, even as the Lord Jesus, in the lonely hour of His unspeakable agony, three times repeated the same words,—“O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me” (Matt. xxvi.).

Let us not be afraid of repetitions simply because they are repetitions. The inspired prayers and praises of David abound with them. The 136th Psalm closes every one of its twenty-six verses with the repeated—“His mercy endureth for ever.” But do let us be afraid of “vain” words and phrases; and all are vain—mere babbling—that are the utterance of the lips only,—utterly vain, unless the words represent our thoughts and desires. “Use not *vain* repetitions,” but as the Psalmist, in contemplation of

the wonderful works of God, bursts out into the repeated exclamation, "His mercy endureth for ever," so as we consider our multiplied and deep necessities, we may well cry, "We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord," and as the multitude of dangers press upon us from without, whilst we feel the infirmity of our own nature, it becomes us with united and repeated voice to pray, "Good Lord, deliver us."

Fear "vain" words, but "continue instant in prayer," and if the importunity of the widow in the parable (Luke xviii.) moved the unjust judge to regard her entreaty, surely "our Father" will hear and answer fervent and persevering prayer. "Pray without ceasing," and as our Lord Jesus in another parable shows the success of the "importunity" of the man who sought the favour of his friend by midnight, so in the night of your need importune God with repeated supplication. "And I" (the Lord Jesus) "say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Luke xi.).

It has sometimes been remarked as strange, that in this Divinely-appointed form and model of prayer

our Lord and Saviour never speaks of Himself as Mediator, nor even mentions His own name. But it must be remembered that Christ was not, in His own personal ministry, a teacher or minister of the Christian dispensation. S. Paul says, "Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision" (Rom. xv. 8). In His life and death He prepared foundations and materials, but the complete plan of the mighty edifice was to be afterwards revealed. The Christian dispensation began after the Christ had "passed into the heavens." He had promised to send a Comforter (ὁ παράκλητος), the Spirit of truth (John xv. 26), who would guide His Church into all truth, who would reveal the things of Christ (John xvi. 13-15); and after His resurrection, on the immediate eve of His ascension, He had "opened their understanding," and unfolded some of the hitherto hidden things of His redeeming work, but they were to tarry until they should be endued with the richer gifts of the enlightening and sanctifying Spirit (Luke xxiv. 45 *et seq.*). And "when the day of Pentecost was fully come," He came in His plenitude of grace and power (Acts ii. 1 *et seq.*). From that day dates the Christian dispensation. It was the birthday of Christianity. Henceforth the words of Christ were brought afresh to the remembrance of His Church.



Hidden things were made manifest; obscure meanings were made clear; and in the light of that golden dawn, the teachings of the Divine Master assumed new character and proportions.

But the light and knowledge of the later day were not prematurely anticipated in Christ's personal ministry. There was the twilight, but the morning was not yet. His discourses were suited to the then present condition of His disciples. The structure of the Lord's Prayer is agreeable with the spirit and general method of His teaching. Mysteries and hidden things of the new kingdom were implied, but not expressed. The germs were there; the development was to come in due season. The Lord Himself warned His apostles of this: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you" (John xvi. 12-14). The Lord Jesus, therefore, makes no premature allusion in this pattern prayer to His own name or to Himself, as the only means of approach to God: this would have been to forestall His own purpose

and work ; but when the Spirit should come, *then*, in the whole harmony and agreement of truth, all men should be taught that Christ is the "way;" that there is "one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. ii. 5).

Let us remark, however, how Christ has involved Himself in every petition. As our exposition proceeds, you will observe how every clause brings us necessarily—if we really endeavour to enter into its depth and fulness—direct to Christ. He is the very centre, substance, life of it. He is the true key to His own prayer.

It has been said to be only the prayer of the adopted children of God. It is true, they only can use it in all the fulness and blessedness of its meaning ; but surely it is man's common prayer. It is the Redeemer's legacy to any and every needy soul that would draw near in worship to the Eternal Father. It is the simplest and sublimest form of words with which any human creature can approach his God.

Let it be the first prayer with which the unwonted lips of the awakened heathen are taught to plead with "the Father of the spirits of all flesh." Let it be the daily prayer of the Christian man, as he struggles to live nearer to his Father God, and more

kindly with his brother man. Let it be the earliest prayer with which you familiarise the lisping accents of childhood. Let it be among the last utterances of the dying saint, as the final kingdom comes, and he is about to attain eternal deliverance from the evil. It is man's common right—his great charter of prayer. When the hearts of mankind shall have learned to feel, and their lives to manifest the principles that this daily prayer involves, Christianity will have completed its mission on earth. Man's next work will be to learn the praises of heaven.

In conclusion, as Stier eloquently says, these are "the words in which the wisdom of God, descending upon us in perfect love, has condensed and enshrined for us neither more nor less than *all, all* which ever has ascended, does now, or ever will ascend, from human hearts in prayer to heaven. Yes, verily, whatsoever may not be included in this cannot be fit subject of prayer, and may not be asked. Such unlicensed prayer is, indeed, no prayer at all in spirit and in truth; for God's Spirit hath not permitted it, neither can it be real communion of the heart with the living God, for presumption and error have neither the confidence of faith. Think and utter aught which is in thy will or thy power to ask, and thou findest it already spoken in this prayer of prayers. Whatever,

from the beginning, since men first, on account of sin and evil, lifted up their heart and hands to heaven, has been in their minds to ask, is here reduced—in the simplicity of the new and everlasting covenant, and last utterance of God to us in His Son—to one word; which will remain man's last utterance also to God, until heaven and earth are divided no more. All the cries which go up from man's breast upon earth to heaven, meet here in their fundamental notes, and are gathered into words which are the simplest and plainest for babes, as they are deep and inscrutable for the wise; as transparent for the weakest understanding of any praying spirit, as they are full of mysterious meanings for the mightiest and last struggles of the spirit into the kingdom and glory of God."

## LECTURE I.

*"Our Father which art in heaven."*—MATT. vi. 9.

WITH what wonderful simplicity this Lord's prayer opens! How unlike the forms with which man is taught to petition his earthly superior! "*Our Father*"—thus this prayer goes forth among men everywhere, with the authority of the Lord Christ, touching the most sacred chords of human emotion; linking itself with those first feelings of trust and love that live naturally in the human breast, and through them emboldening the worshipper as he kneels before his God.

*Father!* The word Father implies personality. He is therefore a personal God whom man is to worship. It is not a principle, but a Person we are to invoke; not nature, but God, "our Father." All worship which loses itself in vague generalities addressed to some abstraction, or trusts in such a thing as men call Nature, is at once condemned by

the opening words of this pattern prayer. "After this manner, therefore, pray ye," to a living, ever-present Person; Himself moving amid and regulating all His works, not estranging Himself from His creation, and leaving it to the unintelligent control of destiny or law, but a Father ever working through all. Himself distilling the gentle rain upon the new-mown grass, or hurling His lightnings through the heavens, shaping in graceful beauty the lilies of the field, or bending His covenant-bow in the clouds, guarding the heedless child in its light-hearted play, or controlling the forces of the universe, laying the beams of His chambers on the waters, riding upon the wings of the winds, yet a sparrow "shall not fall on the ground without your Father" (Matt. x. 29).

The name *Father*, as applied to God, was not entirely unknown to the heathen, though other names indicating His greatness and supremacy were in common use. The Persians and the earliest Greek poets sometimes use the name Father in speaking of the Deity, and one of the latest and noblest of heathen schools even advanced to speak of God as specially "the Father of the good." This was a beam of the true light; and with that instinct with which earnest men cling to a truth once

reached, these teachers lingered about and urged this truth, "God, the Father specially of the good." The heathen application of the name Father to God was only a dim recognition of man's springing from some supreme Source, some unknown Creator. A few nobler spirits half deciphered from creation and human affairs, and half guessed, that unknown Source of life to be good, and hence, in some unknown way, Father peculiarly of the good.

In the Scriptures of the Jewish economy the word Father occurs a few times in its application to God. To the Israelite this word brought a somewhat deeper and richer truth than to the heathen. To the former the story of creation was no guess; nor was the Divine Being entirely a mystery. The Israelite worshipped a revealed God. He knew—his nation's matchless history told him with many tongues—that God specially provides for the wants and interposes for the protection of His children; and, therefore, the Jew could say, "Have we not all one Father? hath not one God created us?" (Mal. ii. 10.) That which was a noble guess of heathenism was a revealed truth to the Jew. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him" (Ps. ciii. 13).

Yet, as Alford well says, speaking of the word

Father, "This was a form of address almost unknown to the old covenant; now and then hinted at as reminding the children of their rebellion (Isa. i. 2; Mal. i. 6), or mentioned as a last resource of the orphan and desolate creature (Isa. lxiii. 16), but never brought out in its fulness, as, indeed, it could not be, till He was come by whom we have received the adoption of sons." No, indeed; even the Israelite only included creation and protection in that word Father. "Hath not the rain a Father? who hath begotten the drops of dew?" (Job xxxviii. 28.)

True, there was a deep yearning in the heart of Israel, and the germinant hope of a closer relation was implanted there. Sometimes it broke out into utterances that forecast the Christian age; but that was only the cry of prophecy, the cry of those taller spirits upon whom broke the first rays of the earth's advancing morning: "Doubtless Thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: Thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer; from everlasting is Thy name" (Isa. lxiii. 16).

It is to the men of the Christian dispensation that that word Father, in the fulness of its meaning, is revealed. "Now once in the end of the world" (in the world's final age, "*ἐπὶ συντελείᾳ, τῶν αἰώνων*," Heb. ix.



26) "hath He" (Christ) "appeared," and by His incarnation, by the Son of God becoming also the Son of man, He hath raised man everywhere into a new relation to the Father, through the common brotherhood of His humanity. S. Augustine has said, "God makes sons of God of the sons of men, because God made a Son of man of the Son of God."

There is yet a deeper and more blessed spiritual sense in which the Christian is made a son of God, and enabled to say, "Our Father." The Lord Jesus not only assumed our nature, and *thus* raised and glorified that nature, but He came also to do for man, everywhere and in all times, a redemptive and renewing work. Man is estranged from God by "the condemnation of a broken law;" but Christ came to remove the penalties of that violated law: "Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour" (Eph. v. 2). A darkness, denser than that which lowered over the land of Egypt on the fatal night of her history, overshadows the world, the Angel of Death moves noiselessly through a "darkness that may be felt;" but "Christ, our Pass-over, is sacrificed for us." Man's moral nature is turned from God, and is opposed to Him; but "God is in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself."

Man's life is tainted with the evil, the selfish, and the ignoble ; Christ came and lived an example of all that is pure, noble, unselfish, brave, God-loving, and left us an illustration of the perfect life, that, catching the inspiration of His example, and being "imitators" of Him, "we shall be saved by His life." Thus Christ the Lord came that through this twofold work, His death and life,—neither separately, but by both in union,—He might be that Saviour who should enable men to say, "Our Father."

"Therefore," as one of the Greek fathers has said, "ye see what need there is of preparation, what manner of life, what kind and how much eagerness are required, so that, elevating our conscience to the measure of this boldness, we may dare to call God 'our Father.'" "God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. iv. 4-6).

What then, shall only those who have been thus renewed and adopted into the Divine family use the blessed and encouraging words, "Our Father"? Surely not. *They* only can use them in their fullest meaning ; but this Paternoster is man's prayer every-

where and in every condition. All men are not renovated, but all men are redeemed. By the privilege of their redemption let them say, "*Our Father.*"

In ancient Judaism, the bond-servants were not allowed to apply the term *father* to their master, but the free servants enjoyed this privilege; and their use of the word was understood as indicating their desire to obtain adoption into the family. The terms of human emancipation have been ratified. The charter of redemption is signed with blood. Ye are all free men by an atonement, not by "corruptible things, such as silver, and gold, but by the precious blood of Christ;" and men are bond-slaves only because they neglect to claim their freedom and fling off the yoke. My brother, whoever thou art,—since thou art man,—go to the footstool of the Eternal Fatherhood with these privileged words, "*Our Father,*" on thy lips and in thine heart, and it will be the pledge of thy desire of adoption, the earnest and commencement of a nobler sonship.

The first words of this prayer teach what ought to be the attitude of man on his approach to God. It should be simple and childlike. As the little one, with its early intermingling of joy and sorrow, comes confidently to its earthly parent's knee, assured of

a kindly hand to wipe its tears away; so man, in the childhood of this mortal life, ought to go to his Father in heaven with trustful love, carrying the burdens of his soul, the secret sorrows and temptations of his inmost life, or the cares and troubles that cross his daily path: and, "if ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?" (Matt. vii. 11.) Go as a child to your Father, who gives to the lower creatures their instinct of affection, so that the "hen gathereth her chickens under her wings," and the fiercest creatures become gentle with their young—to Him who implants that wonderful love in a mother's heart, so susceptible in its tenderness, so constant in its devotion—and be assured that, though the course of nature should be changed, and a mother should "forget her sucking child," yet He will not forget thee. Thy Father hears thy faintest cry; and the feeblest utterance of the devout heart moves the hand that moves the world.

OUR *Father*.—To say this word Father, realising its fulness of meaning in man's sonship to God and God's Fatherhood to man, is very difficult; how much more so when we add that very pregnant word, *our*.

“Our Father!” Not indeed in the sense of oneness with Him who taught the prayer. Jesus said, “When *ye* pray, say, *Our* Father.” The Father of our Lord Jesus and of us; but not in the same way as of us. In His Divine nature, Jesus is the *eternal* Son. In that human nature of our Lord, “born of a woman,” by a manner inconceivable to us, He is the only-begotten of God. Man’s sonship is only that of sinning but redeemed, and, in his best estate, sanctified and adopted, humanity. S. Augustine truly says, “Christ never so unites us as to make no distinction between us and Himself. For He is the Son equal with the Father. He is eternal with the Father, and co-eternal with the Father; but we are made by the Son, being adopted by the Only-begotten. Wherefore, it was never heard from the lips of our Lord Jesus Christ when He conversed with His disciples, that He should say concerning the supreme God, His Father, Our Father; but He either said, My Father, or your Father. . . . He so joined as to distinguish, and so distinguished as not to disjoin. It was His will that we should be one in Him; but the Father and Himself one.”

There is in our Lord’s words ever manifest the self-consciousness of One who, while man, was above man; of One walking in a purer air and at a loftier

altitude of being. One with man in all the essentials of His humanity; separate from man in all the accidents of personal evil. Therefore we find Christ praying *for* His disciples and teaching them to pray, but never praying *with* them. He was the faultless Man—Man in the perfection of manhood; therefore, looking down, from the elevation of His immaculate humanity, upon man in his sins and shame, He said, “When *ye* pray, say.”

All, however, below that Divine Teacher, without any other distinction, must learn to say, with the common feeling of brotherhood, this world-wide, “our Father.” With their feuds and factions, strife of parties, bigotry of sects, national animosities, social jealousies, family divisions, how difficult for men to learn from the heart to use a word that compels them in their most solemn attitude to acknowledge all men as brethren, mingling friend and foe in the common interest of prayer! Yet it must be, or the first condition of this great model—its first word—is contradicted. The free man, in the use of this prayer must admit his bond-slave to brotherhood; the daughter of wealth and fashion must acknowledge her neglected or degraded sister shivering in rags or cowering in shame. The hostility of nations must give place before this unit-

ing *our*; the Samaritan must "deal" with the Jew, and the Gentile be admitted to the covenant. "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. . . . There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26, 28).

This word *our* strikes at all those barriers, reared by pride or prejudice, that estrange man from his brother man. Not those that distinguish station, but those that destroy sympathy; not those that strengthen and stablsh convictions, but those that generate and foster intolerance. This word *our* carries in it the sublime purpose of the Gospel, "flying in the midst of heaven," soaring as it does above the petty schemes of all religious imposture, which have ever sought only a tribe, a sect, or a nation,—it demands the homage of a world. This "Our Father" goes forth to do in the moral world what science endeavours to do in the physical world,—to unite the islands of the sea and the continents of the earth in one electric bond of fellowship. "Seeing the multitudes, He went into a mountain"—the very position was representative—and taught this prayer. From a lofty platform, and to a mingled throng, He spake; and as the breath of the early year moves

through creation, quickening it with the pulses of reviving life,

“Those blind motions of the spring,  
That show the year is turned,”

unsealing the fountains of water, making the trees of the field to clap their hands, enamelling the landscape with the presence of living beauty and the promise of later fruitfulness; so the Lord's prayer is to go forth, quickening the heart with higher life, opening the fountains of purest feeling, ennobling them with the fruitful beauty of human sympathy and Divine love.

“*Our Father.*” These two words, that bind man to man and all men to God, must be learned by every heart, and be spoken by every tongue. They must be translated into every language, and be rehearsed in every clime. “All ranks and conditions of men” must find in them the bond of a common brotherhood. “High and low, rich and poor together,” almoner and almsman, sovereign and subject, all, howsoever otherwise divided, are on one level of fraternal equality, as kneeling at the footstool of the Eternal Mercy they have learned to say “*Our Father.*”

“*Which art in heaven.*” The first words of this prayer inspire confidence, the second awaken awe.



Not our Creator, Lord, King, or Judge—but Father: yet not for a moment are we to approach Him or think of Him as an earthly parent, with erring judgment and changeful will; but as “the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” Thus the thoughts are raised to a higher sphere of life, in confident, yet lofty adoration. As man breathes this prayer, his mind is rapt away from the shadowed and transient forms that are around him, to a region of unseen yet abiding realities, holy and sublime. The soul of man in true prayer is not on the earth, but itself also in the heavens. Even one of the heathen poets speaks of “assuming his golden wings that he may ascend to heaven and converse with Jove.” So the Christian, with the golden wings of faith and prayer, may ascend to the heaven of heavens. Prayer is the soul’s translation.

If we pray as the Pharisees, forgetting God in vain and selfish thoughts of ourselves and men; or if, like the heathen, our prayers are mere words, spoken phrases, then they are vain and powerless, but if offered from the heart, more and more we shall know their power and blessedness. As the soul is raised to the great object of all prayer by the tender word *Father*, so it is lifted up to the

habitation of His glory to learn the reverence that is due unto His name, by the words, "which art in heaven."

Doubtless there is here a primary reference to that sphere of glory in which the Great Supreme reveals His adorable Majesty to worshipping intelligences, where the King is seen "in His beauty;" where cherubim and seraphim continually do cry, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of Sabaoth; that locality which is the centre of universal government, where the throne of majesty and dominion is erected, whence proceed the mandates of the Divine Will, that rule the hosts of heaven and control the destinies of lower spheres. *Heaven*, where "our Father" dwelleth in light as in a garment, while wing-veiled angels bow before His throne. *Heaven*, of which all that is fair and beautiful on earth is but a faint foreshadow, for "all things that are on earth in terrestrial forms are in heaven in their celestial antitypes." *Heaven*, where our Father is worshipped by ten thousand of His saints—where, O "Father of an infinite majesty," "the glorious company of the apostles, praise Thee; the goodly fellowship of the prophets, praise Thee; the noble army of martyrs, praise Thee;" and the cry of their praise is as "the voice of many waters, and as the

voice of a great thunder ; and the voice of harpers harping upon their harps."

But the word in the original here is in the plural form (*ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς*), "in the heavens." In the 10th verse it is said, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in *heaven*," where the word is singular, and doubtless alludes to that "heaven of heavens," of which we have spoken, where worshipping hosts delight to do His will ; but here the words, "in the heavens," suggest at least what Holy Scripture elsewhere affirms,—“Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain *Him* ;” He filleth immensity, inhabiting all the heavens of space, making the pavilions of the universe the temple of His glorious presence.

He is enthroned where the seraphim sing, yet He is very near to every one of us. He makes His dwellings afar beyond the outermost world that, sentinel-like, marches its lonely round on the frontiers of creation, yet He folds His wings of love over the cradle of sleeping infancy ; in the lonely lands unmarked by human foot, in the depths of primeval forests, “which no foot knoweth,” which “the lion’s whelps have not trodden, nor the fierce lion passed by”—in those great solitudes of creation, *He* is, yet He moves ever-present, though

unseen, amid the crowded thoroughfares of men, and in the retirements of their most private life He is a constant Presence. "If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me" (Ps. cxxxix. 8-10). An ever and everywhere present God! Surely such a thought ought to give solemnity to life and reality to prayer.

Is there not a danger that men pray, as though it were to a being afar removed in some remote region of the universe, forgetting that He is a living, personal, present Father, by the side, nay, in the very heart of him who truly prays? Let this fact be realised, and men would scarcely dare to kneel in thoughtlessness to *say* prayers with listless lips and with unheeding heart. O thou, who hast been taught at morn and at even-time and on the holy day of rest to pray, be mindful that He to whom thou prayest is before thee, His eye is on thy heart!

"Enoch walked with God." Men say it is a great mystery. My brother, it may be thy privilege. Grasp this fact—that God, "our Father," is near

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thee in all thy paths. Speak with Him in prayer as a Personal, though an Invisible Presence. Remember that prayer is communion between the unseen in man and the unseen God—between thy spirit and Him who “is a Spirit.” Live in the attitude of prayer, in ever simple, child-like dependence upon God. So thou shalt walk with God, and afterward it shall be said of thee, he “was not, for God took him.” “For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones” (Isa. lvii. 15).

## LECTURE II.

*"Hallowed be Thy Name."*—MATT. vi. 9.

ALFORD, quoting a famous German commentator, says, "God's name is not merely His appellation, which we speak with the mouth, but also, and principally, the idea which we attach to it—His being, as far as it is confessed, revealed, and known." Stier has some remarks precisely similar to the foregoing of De Wette. Alford also himself adds, "The 'Name of God' in Scripture is used to signify that revelation of Himself which He has made to men, which is all that we know of Him; into the depth of His being, as it is, no human soul can penetrate."

The word in Hebrew which we render *Name* (שֵׁם) signifies more than a mere appellation or denomination, it implies distinction and character; so in Gen. vi. 4, it is rendered "*renown*," in Eccles. vii. 1, "*good name*," and in 1 Chron. v. 24, it is represented by "*valour*" and "*famous*." The Name of God is,

therefore, to us, the intransferable representation of the Divine character. In Holy Scripture, He reveals Himself to us by the word of His Name, as He has manifested Himself to us in the flesh by the ever-living Word, His Son. The meaning of this solemn petition is not, therefore, that only the title or appellation (*nomen*) of God be hallowed, that *it* be kept from profane use, and spoken with worthy reverence. Such a meaning is too shallow to exhaust the *fulness* of this great prayer. So much is implied, but much more. It is that God Himself, in all His august attributes and perfections, may be revered. *Calvin* well says, "To sanctify the Name of God means nothing else than to give unto the Lord all the glory due unto His Name, so that men may never think or speak of Him but with the greatest veneration." It is the Supreme Being Himself that is to be hallowed.

But what is to be understood by this word *hallowed*? The Greek word (*ἁγιάζω*), of which this is a translation, is a compound, and signifies that which is separated from the earthly, and is used to signify anything which is set apart from secular or profane use. So the vessels employed in the ancient temple service were *hallowed*, because dedicated entirely to sacred uses. The Levite was *hallowed*,

because altogether separated from any secular function, and employed only in holy offices. Thus the word comes to mean, that which is pure, holy, separate from pollution. But God is eternally and essentially holy; no power of fiend nor man can defile that immaculate purity. This is, therefore, a petition that the Divine Name may be hallowed, as S. Augustine says, "*in us*;" that every word of our tongue and every thought of our profoundest life, may yield the glory due unto that awful Name.

Thus in the very outset, "In this prayer, self, which would pray only for itself, is torn up from the roots." The first impulse of Pharisaism is, "*Mine* be the glory;" but the great yearning of Christianity is, "*Thine* be the glory." As S. Chrysostom has it, "Worthy of him who calls God Father is the prayer to ask nothing before the glory of His Father, but to account all things as secondary to the work of praising Him." This great model of devotion, therefore, teaching us what is to be the beginning of all true prayer, does not put into our lips a petition first for our own immediate wants, but first a cry for the Divine glory. However present and poignant the consciousness of need, however deep the conviction of sin, however earnest the longing for pardon, however fainting and helpless, the first cry of the



most abject and agonised soul must be, "Hallowed be Thy Name."

Thus the prayer that the Lord Jesus teaches man to offer, begins with God; the prayers that men are wont themselves to frame, begin with themselves. Is not selfishness, indeed, the very origin of many of our prayers? self, not God, their aim? Give *us* something, rather than "what shall we render unto the Lord for all His benefits?" (Ps. cxvi. 12).

In this prayer we have the true key-note of all devotion; and, however difficult and contrary to the ordinary habit of our mind, we must learn to say first, "Hallowed be *Thy* Name." First, God's glory, then our own blessings. It is confessedly difficult thus to put self behind, and God foremost. It is the attainment of the higher Christian life. So this prayer is difficult, as it must be, since it is the highest form of prayer—the perfection of prayer. It is above man, but he is to struggle up to it; and day by day as he studies it and offers it to God from the heart, he will become better acquainted with its fulness of meaning, and feel increasingly the joy and power of its daily employment. But again, God's Name can only be hallowed where His Nature is known. As God more and more discovers Himself to the soul of the worshipper, he becomes able to

render a homage increasingly worthy of that awful Name. Thus this petition asks that God will reveal *Himself*. How fitting that this should be the first cry of prayer! Have not all the loathsome abominations that have been done under the name of religion had their origin and sanction in false ideas concerning the Divine Name? With the general diffusion of knowledge, and the spread of a refining civilisation, the grosser superstitions vanish from the earth; yet errors as foolish, if less foul, still flourish in the erring, because morally polluted, heart of man. For our own souls, therefore, as also for our brethren—men everywhere—it behoves us, in calling upon “our Father,” first to pray, “Hallowed be Thy Name.”

God is everywhere, and at all times, declaring His Name, would men but observe it. He writes it on the heavens as on a mighty scroll, in countless worlds, and it is traced on every leaf that flutters in the forest. God moves in His vast creation. His attributes shine resplendent through all His works. The simplest moss, crushed by the heedless foot of the wayfaring man, is the mute witness of its Maker's glory. The lightning displays His majesty in characters of flame; the thunder is His psalm of praise; the hues upon the insect's wing, and all the splendours of a summer noon, testify His wisdom,

power, and love, "for whom are all things and by whom are all things" (Heb. ii. 10).

Beloved brethren, remember, and as at morn and early eve you teach your children—the little ones that God's great love has given you—to call Him Father, teach them that He is the Father of creation, that they may learn to trace His majesty and mercy inscribed on all His works. God would not be forgotten by man—His creature and child—and therefore to all creation's myriad forms He has said, "Ye are My witnesses." Yet men walk heedlessly on, disregarding His presence and the traces of His glory. It was not so with the Psalmist. In his inspired odes he delighted to celebrate the praises of Him who "sendeth His springs into the valleys, which run among the hills," who "maketh the grass to grow," and who planteth the cedars of Lebanon, giveth to the sea its bounds, and appointeth the moon for seasons. "O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! in wisdom hast Thou made them all; the earth is full of Thy riches" (Ps. civ.).

It is well, however, to preserve a wholesome fear of a semi-Pantheism, which is only too apt to steal into the hearts of men, often betraying itself in their language; a habit of thought that is in danger of confounding God with Nature; and in the precision

and constancy of law, and in the well-ordered forces of creation, seeing only a great system, and not the presence of a living Intelligence, a Divine Person, that originally established and that still moves in and controls His works. The intelligent use of this prayer precludes such an error, teaching us to acknowledge, in the words "our Father," His personal and parental presence and control. But in our wish to avoid one error, let us take heed lest we fall into another only less mischievous, of forgetting God in His works, and neglecting to worship Him as the Father of creation, of disqualifying ourselves to chant, "with the spirit and with the understanding also," many of those glorious psalms with which the sweet singer of Israel was wont to praise the Lord ; for "the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handywork" (Ps. xix. 1).

But there is yet another and higher source in which we are to learn the Name of God: in the Lord Jesus Christ, in His *Person*, and in His *offices*.

Thus, as we said in the outset of these discourses, though the name of Christ is never mentioned in this prayer, yet, from the first words of the invocation to the very doxology, the examination of every clause brings us direct to Him. We find Him and His

mediation in the very core of every petition. At His feet, and in the contemplation of His work, we learn most fully the Divine Name, and through Him only can we hallow it.

In the *Person of Christ*, this *Name* is discovered, for He is "God manifest in the flesh." Man, in his present condition, is unable to apprehend the purely spiritual or abstract. *It*, therefore, cannot satisfy him. It is a mystery, and while the mysterious may fill the soul with awe, it repels the deepest—the loving homage of the heart. The religions of all nations attest this. However various may have been men's thoughts of God, and however crude and false, yet everywhere men have been agreed in this characteristic of their religion, a dissatisfaction with the abstract. Man may have worshipped what he termed a "Great Spirit," but he has always embodied that Spirit in some material object. Nature, animate and inanimate, has been deified. The sun, the river, the wild beast of the forest, the insect, the reptile—in short, creation in her grandest and meanest forms, has been made the object of worship. Furthermore, to satisfy this intense craving of the human heart for a God, and one embodied in some material type, "The workman melteth a graven image, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold, and casteth

silver chains. He that is so impoverished that he hath no oblation chooseth a tree that will not rot; he seeketh unto him a cunning workman to prepare a graven image, that shall not be moved" (Isa. xl. 19, 20). And thus men have endeavoured to give a substantial and bodily reality to their perverted and perplexed notions of Deity; to bring the Divine nearer to earth, and more within the sphere of human apprehension. And does not this widely-spread idolatry, false as it is in itself, yet represent a great fact,—man's craving for, and real need of, the manifestation of God, and that in some form apprehensible by human sense? Nor would it be at all difficult to show that in the various dispensations of religion God has graciously recognised this need and craving of the human soul.

Let us make one inquiry further, whether there is not something to be learned on this point from the history of the later times of the highest schools of the ancient philosophy. Their favourite themes of discourse were the attributes of physical and moral greatness. Love, wisdom, truth, power, and the like, were subjects of frequent meditation and discussion; yet there was evinced a deep-lying discontent with the contemplation of these as mere abstractions. As such, they could not satisfy even the philosophic

student, and there broke forth the utterances of an earnest longing for the embodiment of these physical and moral perfections in some *living person*. And was not this only a different expression of the same profound want in man, of which we have already spoken? A further proof that man everywhere, not only in the lower conditions of intellectual culture, but also in the highest walks of learning and speculation, seeks a God manifest or even incarnate—a Deity impersonated.

Is not the incarnation of our Lord Christ the Divine response to this deep longing of His creature man? Is not the satisfaction of this common craving of the human heart one of the high purposes to be achieved by “the brightness of the Father’s glory, and the express image of His person,” becoming “*Immanuel*”—“God with us”? For in Him all the physical attributes and moral perfections of the Deity are embodied in a *human* person—“God manifest in the flesh”—and thereby in Him, that suffering, yet triumphant *Man*, we learn the mercy and the majesty of God. Therefore, as Christ drew near to the end of His earthly ministry, He said, speaking of the Father, “I have manifested Thy Name” (John xvii. 15), that *Name* which is to be “hallowed” among men. On the theatre of

the world, and before the observation of mankind, *Immanuel* revealed the majesty of the Supreme Name, for to Him belonged all power in heaven and earth, and He displayed His resources of greatness and goodness. Disease cowered at His rebuke—Death, “the ancient conqueror,” relinquished his captives—demons fled affrighted at *Immanuel's* word—storm and tempest heard His majestic voice and trembled into calm—in short, all the spiritual and physical forces of the universe bent at His feet, and in their mute submission to His resistless will owned Him Lord of all; for “in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Col. ii. 9), therefore in Him we ought to study, and from Him we ought to learn the glory and perfection of that *Name* that we are required to “hallow.”

There is a danger of our seeing only one phase of the mission of the Lord of glory among mankind; of fixing an attention so intent upon some one of the purposes to be accomplished by our Lord's incarnation, as to forget or overlook others equally important. Some persons, certainly in fact, if not in theory, regard the work of man's redemption through the atonement of Christ's death, as the sole purpose of His incarnation. Others say, the Son of God became the Son of man that He might be the



Great Teacher of men ; by His doctrine unfolding the most important moral and spiritual truths, and by His life giving a common example of all that is noble, pure, and excellent in human life in its highest, its perfect condition. Furthermore, was there not another purpose co-ordinate with these—viz., that Christ *in Himself* should be a revelation of God, impersonating the Divine attributes and perfections, that man, having a clearer apprehension of the Divine Being, might more intelligently and heartily adore and hallow His Name?

Yes, there was a threefold purpose in that event for which four thousand years had been preparing, and for which the hearts of men were yearning ; and to recognise only one of these, to the exclusion of the other, is to dismember Christ. See, therefore, in His death, “the propitiation for *your* sins, and not for *yours* only, but for the sins of the whole world.” See, in His life, man with all his sorrows, cares, needs, but man with courage, faith, tenderness, love—the Example. But allow me at present to invite you to consider particularly our Lord Jesus as the Revealer of the Father—in His person and work declaring the Divine Name. It is true, creation “declares the glory of God,” in the wisdom and constancy of those laws that regulate, and in

the grandeur of those stupendous forces that sustain her mighty frame; but how much more clearly is the greatness of the Eternal Name displayed to us, as we see the wisdom and the power impersonated in the Lord Jesus, while He interposes His authority, suspends the laws and controls the powers of creation by His resistless word!

Not only in His life of action, but also in His mediatorial sufferings, our Lord exhibits the perfections of the Eternal Name. On Calvary, the justice and love, the wisdom and truth of God are displayed with strange and startling emphasis. In the garden of the passion, and on the hill of death, the moral perfections of the Father have their most wonderful display.

My brethren, if you would know truly, in order to "hallow" with deep sincerity "our Father's" *Name*, live very near, in thoughtful attention, to Immanuel's life. He is the Interpreter. Study His life; accompany Him in His journeyings among men. Dwell with Immanuel; hear His words of unerring wisdom; mark His works of all-controlling power; see His life-long exhibition of unspeakable love; and as you grow in knowledge of Him, more and yet more you will learn the glory of the Eternal Name. But in proportion as clearer views of God are afforded to

us, increasing obligations are imposed upon us to "show forth His praise, not only with our lips but in our lives; by giving up ourselves to His service, and by walking before Him in holiness and righteousness all our days." But how far all this lies beyond any power of our own! How utterly impossible to "hallow" the Divine Name without the abundant and constant supply of His grace; but He working *in us*, when the heart and will yearn for Him, and long to do His will, can enable us to keep apart, and above all things in our thought and love, His Holy Name, and so He teaches us in our daily prayer to say, "Hallowed be Thy Name."

If we pray from our heart, "Hallowed be Thy Name," we must earnestly endeavour, in order to the fulfilment of our own prayer, to realise for ourselves personally "the fulness of the blessings," that He who declares the Father's Name came to procure for all men the forgiveness of sin and the renewal of the spirit by the Holy Ghost; that in us and by us, in our inmost heart and in our outward, every-day life, we also may, God helping us, declare the glory of God's Name, by displaying the strength, beauty, holiness of lives regulated by His

will and animated by His Spirit. Strive to have within you His presence, who is "the light of the world," and then "let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. v. 16).

## LECTURE III.

*"Thy kingdom come."*—MATT. vi. 10.

"THE Lord hath prepared His throne in the heavens, and His kingdom ruleth over all," says the Psalmist (Ps. ciii. 19). Jeremiah designates God "King of Nations." So God is ever the Supreme Ruler and Monarch of the universe ; in the heavens, where systems of worlds move in accordance with the ordained harmony of His law ; and in the earth, controlling the elements by the word of His power, bringing the seasons in their healthful succession, and exercising His government over the affairs of nations. "The Lord is King for ever and ever" (Ps. x. 16). But "God is not the author of confusion" (1 Cor. xiv. 33). Everywhere in the *material* world there are the highest order and harmony ; whilst the forces of the *moral* world are in strife, perplexity, conflict, disorder, for "where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work"

(James iii. 16). This confusion, then, is the result of some alien principle that has intruded into the sphere of moral life. But what is the rebel principle in which originates this disastrous "confusion and every evil work"? It is sin (*ἀνομία*), lawlessness, for "sin is lawlessness" (*ἡ ἀμαρτία ἐστὶν ἡ ἀνομία* : 1 John iii. 4). This is that hostile principle that is at war with the moral government of God, with the well-being of the personal life of man, and with the general interests of every commonwealth. The vice of lawlessness confuses the order and harmony of the Great Lawgiver's beneficent will, and is necessarily opposed to the happiness, the well-being, and the well-doing of man. This rebel movement

"Brought death into the world, and all our woe."

It is the curse. It estranges man from God, the well-spring of strength, wisdom, and joy. It separates man from man. It weakens sympathy. It withers fellowship. The helping hand of friendship is touched, how often, with its paralysis. And the purest and noblest principles and emotions that dignify human life, sicken beneath the subtle spread of its poisonous infection.

Is not this disordered and groaning creation crying out, with its thousand woes, for some Recon-

ciler, some Daysman and Brother—in short, for the Christ of history?—One who shall overthrow evil, uproot its power, overturn its throne, destroy its kingdom, banish the disorder and misery of its reign, recover this suffering earth, and set up a new kingdom.

In the very first hour of the presence of evil in the world, the promise of such a Deliverer was given to man. It was this hope that gradually unfolded through the successive dispensations of religion,—brightening unto the perfect day. Even heathenism caught some fragments of the wide-spread tradition—some rays of the common hope. Her poets and sages expressed the general longing for such a One, and as the time of Christ's advent drew on, they added their conviction that He should shortly appear. Judaism, the repository of the true revelation, instructed by the prophetic voice of ages, confidently looked for the expected Deliverer,—Messiah.

Just at this juncture, when the hearts of men were stirring with expectation, the clarion-cry of the Baptist rang through the wilderness of Judea,—“The kingdom of heaven is at hand.” “Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan,” flocked around the herald.

Generations had passed away hoping for this

Messianic kingdom. Patriarch and prophet and lawgiver prayed, prophesied, and prepared for its coming. Now the foundations of its throne were about to be laid. But the Jew misunderstood the nature of this kingdom, and misinterpreted the voice of prophecy. He groaned beneath a foreign yoke—the yoke of the despised Gentile. His country had become a Roman province. A Roman procurator gave judgment in the highest tribunals. A Roman tax-gatherer demanded “tribute to Cæsar;” and, in the face of all this, the Jew felt the pride of his nationality spoiled. He saw that the glory had departed from Israel; and beneath this humiliating burden of national bondage, he forgot the direr enslavement of man’s moral nature. He thought with pride of his country’s former greatness, when the throne of David was established, and “Solomon in all his glory” ruled over all the countries from beyond the Euphrates to the Nile; when princes were his tributaries, and powerful kings did him homage; whilst his navy, built of Syrian timber and manned by Phœnician mariners, gathered the merchandise of the wealthiest ports, from Southern Arabia to Spain. The mines of Ophir poured him forth their choicest gold; Egypt furnished his horses and chariots; Tyre sent him the cedars of Lebanon,



costly dyes, and cunning craftsmen; whilst the Eastern queen burdened her camels with "spices and very much gold and precious stones," as the tribute of her wondering admiration. And as the Jew read in the sacred annals of his country's history what had already been, and then turned to the glowing pages of inspired prophecy and saw the picture of what was yet to be,—a Prince of unbounded dominion, reigning over a kingdom of unparalleled glory,—his hopes brightened with anticipations of One mightier than David, and more glorious than Solomon, who "should restore the kingdom to Israel."

But, alas! the Jew misunderstood the ancient prophecies; for whether or no there is a remote allusion to any personal reign of Christ and establishment of an earthly kingdom, yet evidently the primary and most important reference of these prophecies is to Christ's spiritual government and His indwelling in human hearts. Outward material figures are used as faintly illustrative of that which is greater than the outward and material,—the moral and spiritual,—whilst the Jew interpreted these figures in their most literal and superficial sense. Thus the promise of generations was supplanted by a fiction springing from man's earthliness and pride.

It is true, a great Prince and Conqueror was promised, but One whose throne should be set up, and whose victories should be achieved in a new sphere of conquest,—One for whom not only the Jew, but the whole creation groaned,—One whose unique work lay much deeper than the adjustment of national rights, and far removed from the gratification of national pride,—One, indeed, whose mission should be to overthrow that evil that lies at the root of all national, social, domestic, or personal wrong, suffering, shame, sorrow, and confusion.

But such a Prince or kingdom as this, men could not readily appreciate. They had one fixed, familiar type of what they esteemed the utmost splendour of individual distinction or national greatness, and that was an external, temporal, and earthly one. The Jew saw it exhibited in his noblest princes and in the ancient kingdom; whilst to the Gentile it was revealed in his victorious Cæsars, and in the world-wide empire.

Under this dominant idea the Jew misread the glorious promises of his ancient prophet-bards, and despised a Messiah who disappointed the long-cherished expectation and disregarded the proud hopes of a restored kingdom and an exalted nationality; whilst the Gentile was ready also heartily to

reject the advances of the Founder of a new kingdom which contradicted all settled notions of regal glory. Thus, "He was despised and rejected of men"—He for whom the prophecies of a thousand years had been preparing the way, and for whom the sorrow, confusion, and shame of a disordered world cried aloud—because the nobility of His mission was not appreciated, nor His exalted government understood, "in whose days the righteous shall flourish," who "shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth," and "whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom."

*What, then, is the nature of this kingdom of Christ?* "My kingdom is not of this world" (John xviii. 36), said the Lord Jesus. Thus He struck down all notions of mere earthly greatness and temporal splendour, and declared how new the very constitution of that kingdom should be that He would found, spread universally, and establish perpetually among men.

He does not say, "My kingdom is not *in* this world," but that it is "not *of* this world." Not *of* the familiar, worldly type, its conquests to be gained by the secular arm, and its glory to consist in secular pomp and distinction; but *in* this world, as the scene in which the Divine Prince Himself laid the

foundations of its throne, issued its laws, and gave the earnest of its future triumphs and glory. *In* the world, and that in a deeper sense than ever before any kingdom had been. *In* it, *within* it; *in* the very centre of the world's life, in its thoughts and affections, *in* its heart; "Behold, the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke xvii. 21). The ambition of the most famous princes had been satisfied with the conquest of earthly dominions, and the subjugation of the outward life of men; by founding dynasties enriched with the spoils of conquered kingdoms, and obeyed by millions, who crouched to the authority of an iron power. Such empires might satisfy the Alexanders and Cæsars, but not the Christ of Nazareth. Theirs was only *of* this world; His is to be *in* it, but not *of* it. He came to found a monarchy more splendid than any that had ever appeared to the most ambitious dreams of former princes—the monarchy of mind. He came to achieve conquests within the very spirit of man; winning the profoundest devotion of his affections, and the exultant homage of his thoughts.

This is that idea to which we must give most earnest heed, that Christ's kingdom is inward and spiritual; for just as aforetime men commonly failed to receive, so there is a danger lest we fail to retain

this idea, and begin to imagine our union to Christ, our loyalty to His government, our subjection to His kingdom, to consist in such things as are simply outward and ceremonial—especially if these are hallowed with the rites and ordinances of religion—instead of that which is eminently, emphatically, and essentially inward and spiritual. “The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost” (Rom. xiv. 17). For “not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man;” that bodily food is only assimilated to the bodily and perishing nature, and does not reach the centre of spiritual life; “but that which cometh out of the mouth defileth a man” (Matt. xv. 11), because it discovers the corruption and decay that work within the heart. So “the kingdom of God is not meat and drink,”—in other words, not anything that is external, physical, or only connected with the outward life; “but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost,”—only those principles that live and dwell within the heart; “righteousness,”—the recovery of the perverted soul of man to rectitude, its upright agreement with the will of God; “peace,”—“being justified by faith, we have *peace* with God” (Rom. v. 1),—the deep sense of reconciliation, and the gradual victory over those evil passions that war

within the soul; "joy,"—for righteousness and peace, holiness and happiness, go hand in hand, and he into whom this new kingdom has come, "rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

And as this kingdom makes its bloodless conquests, and erects its beneficent throne among men, the prophecies of "the latter-day glory" shall have their noblest fulfilment. When "righteousness, peace, and joy" dwell in every heart, it may be that the lower creation shall be infected with the spirit of gentleness and peace, so that even, with an almost literal exactness, "the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den" (Isa. xi. 6-8). But of this we are assured, that the fiercer and less tameable passions of men shall be subdued—"they shall not hurt nor destroy," and love, as a little child, shall lead them.

Whether or no nature shall be quickened with the vigour of more productive life, and adorned with a

richer verdure, so that "the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose" (Isa. xxxv. 1), we know not, but this we know, that the waste places of the moral wilderness shall wave "white unto the harvest," and desert hearts shall become fruitful as Eden. "The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." "Our Father—Thy kingdom come."

*By what agency is this kingdom to be established?*

The Lord Jesus said, "I must *preach* the kingdom of God" (Luke iv. 43). And the Great Commission with which He invested His apostles was, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them" (*μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς*—literally, "make disciples of all nations, baptizing them") "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20). Again, on the eve of His ascension He gave His last command, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature"—*πάσῃ τῇ κτίσει*—"to the whole creation" (Mark xvi. 15). In other words, "baptize and teach"—"by the preaching of the

gospel and the administration of the sacrament of initiation, make disciples ;" "and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Agreeably with this instruction "they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word with signs following" (Mark xvi. 20). And it is recorded in respect of the first day of the Christian age, "they that gladly received his word were baptized, and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, and *the* \* fellowship, and in *the* breaking of *the* bread, and in *the* prayers" (Acts ii. 41, 42).

The gospel of Christ is to be proclaimed and His holy sacraments to be administered, and these, accompanied by the Spirit of Christ, are the agency of the world's renovation. They are pledged to change the whole moral and spiritual condition of this disordered and suffering world. They are the Divinely-appointed means by which the conquests of this new kingdom are to be achieved, its government established over the life, its principles implanted in the heart, and the millennial blessings of its beneficent reign bestowed on universal man. Gospel truth and sacred ordinances are the instrumental

\* *Vide* the use of the article in the original.



means, and the Holy Spirit, who is so emphatically termed in the New Testament "the Spirit of Christ," is the quickening and efficient power.

Therefore, we read that our Lord called together His apostles, and "sent them to preach the kingdom of God" (Luke ix. 2). As "ambassadors for Christ" (2 Cor. v. 20); "the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor. iv. 1), they were commanded to go forth everywhere to preach the gospel of His spiritual kingdom, to baptize into its citizenship, to confirm believers, and as "overseers" (*ἐπίσκοποι*) to guard and "feed the Church of God" (Acts xx. 28). They were to organise, establish, and extend among all nations a new polity.

But, as we have seen, more is needed than even gospel truth and holy sacraments, in order to the implanting and building up of spiritual life, and for the growth and perpetuity of the Christian commonwealth. The Holy Ghost is the quickening Spirit. It is His active presence that qualifies with efficiency the agencies and ordinances appointed for the furtherance of the Redeemer's kingdom. Therefore, the Lord Jesus Himself said, "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send

Him unto you. And when He is come, He will reprove" (ἐλέγξει = convince) "the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John xvi. 7, 8). And so, until He came to seal their commission, even the apostles were commanded to wait; "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke xxiv. 49). But when, on the memorable morning of Pentecost, the Holy Ghost descended, the *truth* expanded into new and nobler proportions even to the apostles themselves, and now these hitherto timorous, erring, and feeble men became inspired with heroic courage, with corrected and enlarged views of the *Christian* kingdom, and with the mightiest moral power that had ever been wielded by men.

It is the Spirit working by the truth that is to convince (John xvi. 7, 8), that is to convert (John iii. 5), that is to enlighten the mind (John xiv. 26, and xvi. 13), that is to comfort the heart (John xiv. 18)—in short, that is the living power of the truth.

As man, "formed of the dust of the ground," lay, fresh from his Maker's hand, upon the sward of Eden, there was the utmost physiological completeness—the physical organism was perfect in all its parts, but the lifeless clay lay cold, helpless, and inactive—symmetry without soul; but when "God

breathed into his nostrils the breath of life," the dust became man, and he stood up in all the strength, activity, and grandeur of his manhood; so the truth of the gospel, the revelation of God, is complete in all its parts, a symmetrical and systematic whole; but it is only when quickened by the Spirit that inspired it that it becomes a living, active, all-conquering power. Therefore, the latter-day triumphs of the truth, when the "nation shall be born in a day," are to be distinguished by the mightier forthcoming of the Holy Spirit.

Thus, as the nature of this new kingdom differs from all mere earthly dynasties, so the agencies for its establishment are distinct from theirs. Earthly kingdoms, with the "battle of the warrior, with confused noise, and with garments rolled in blood," have won their territories and upheld their thrones; but the conquests of the kingdom of Christ are "not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts" (Zech. iv. 6),—by the Spirit of God working through His inspired truth, either in the page of literature, by the eloquence of the living voice, by teaching and preaching, by the operation of mind upon mind, and heart upon heart,—so silently and steadily it is to prevail. "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation" (Luke xvii. 20).

As in the kingdom of nature, so in the kingdom of grace, the grandest operations are performed "without observation." It is not the volcano, nor the cataract, but the gentle dew and genial sunshine that freshen and fertilise the earth; and so likewise the spiritual forces of the Church of God operate silently, and without ostentation. As the advancing season moves in creation with subtle and unobserved energy, stirring the frozen currents of natural life with the pulses of reviving vigour, obliterating the bleak and barren traces of winter with the mantling beauty of the spring; so the mighty but silent influences of truth and grace work into the individual or national heart, quickening it with the energy of holier principles, and adorning it with the beauty of nobler life.

It is true that sometimes, as in nature, one generous shower will in a day change the whole aspect of a landscape withered with drought; so in the history of this new kingdom there have been, and will be, epochs in which a year does the work of an age,—special periods in which great conquests have been won, formidable obstructions removed, or the foundations of its throne more firmly secured.

Christianity dates its beginning from such a period, when the weapons of Christian truth—

directed by the promised Spirit that should come, the Spirit of Christ—were proven in the first conflict of the new kingdom, and three thousand conquered hearts attested how resistless “the sword of the Spirit.” Another marked period may be dated from the destruction of Jerusalem, when the opposition of Judaism, as a religious system, perished in the overthrow of the temple, and the abolition for ever of the Judaic institution of sacrifice. A third period may reckon from the times of Constantine the Great, when Christianity was emancipated from severe civil restraints, and the “red right hand” of persecution was withdrawn. A fourth period dates from the Reformation, when, after the heroic efforts of not a few earnest reformers before the Reformation, Luther at last succeeded in bursting the prison doors, and letting the captive truth go free, to speak again on the earth, shaking hoary superstitions with the echo of her voice, and stirring the hearts of men with the inspiration of her story. The last century marks another such period, when the slumbering Christianity of this nation was aroused by the self-denying and indefatigable labours of Wesley and Whitfield. So also a quickened activity and prayerful expectation have distinguished recent times. Let us pray that the activity may be perpetuated,

and that the expectation may be realised in the rapid and permanent spread of the conquests of the kingdom of our God and of His Christ.

Already, since the first victories of the new kingdom were achieved, eighteen eventful centuries have passed, crimsoned with the martyrs' blood, and brave with the confessors' testimony, yet also, alas! dishonoured and enfeebled with the wide-spread unfaithfulness of those who ought to have borne the "banners for the truth" with strong and self-forgetting zeal; and how much is yet to be endured and done ere every moral citadel shall be conquered, the victorious ensigns of Immanuel float over every fortress, and the heart of man everywhere be won to the loyalty of love!

I need not remind you of central inlands into which the name of the Prince of Peace has never been carried, of vast continents upon which His flag has scarcely been unfurled. I need not name empires, that count their populations by hundreds of millions, across whose frontiers the ambassadors of the new kingdom have but just borne the treaties of salvation.

It is sufficient surely to arouse every one of us to the utmost activity of zeal, and to bow our hearts in an unparalleled importunity of prayer, when we con-

sider the moral and spiritual condition of our own country. Britain boasts that it is the home of religious freedom, the metropolis of Christian activity, the motherland from whence go forth colonists to reclaim the moral wastes, to erect the standard and widen the boundaries of this new kingdom; yet at home rebellion rages, and disloyalty is not deemed dishonour. Look at the present moral and spiritual condition of our large towns and cities, the busy and crowded centres of our national activity. Dare you venture into the courts and alleys, that lower stratum of our social life, where depravity flourishes in darkness, and crime keeps constant carnival? If not, look into the chambers of trade and commerce, or even at the ordinary thoroughfares of business or pleasure, and see there the moral disorder and confusion that prevail, and how society cries, with a thousand tongues, for One, under whose dominion discord shall give place to harmony, confusion to order, lawlessness to obedience, hatred to love, and "righteousness, joy, and peace" shall be universally established; for "the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ" (Rev. xi. 15).

By the use of this prayer, "Thy kingdom come," we are pledged to activity in endeavouring to diffuse

that gospel by which the immortal triumphs of His kingdom are to be won ; for surely the offering of a prayer does not exhaust the energy of our desire, nor can we be guilty of asking God, "our Father," to send His new kingdom, while we with sinful inconsistency stand by offering no aid to advance its advent.

Much more, my beloved brethren, the use of this prayer pledges us to open our own hearts to receive this kingdom in all its power and fulness, and to give the most diligent heedfulness that we are tolerating no habits that may enfeeble the influence of our Christian life or mar the beauty of its integrity ; but rather let us endeavour, before and above all other means, to hasten the fulfilment of our own prayers, by diffusing the silent but mighty influence of a Christian character, through personal life in Him who is the life of men (John xi. 25, 26).

Time would fail us to enter upon any consideration of the more remote allusion to the kingdom of glory in heaven. Concerning the glory of that kingdom we can here know but very little ; the mind cannot conceive, much less can language convey, any adequate idea of its character. Suffice it for us to know, that the utmost joy and splendour of the kingdom of grace on earth are but very faintly representative



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of the blessedness and grandeur of the kingdom of glory in heaven, which Christ has gone to "prepare" (John xiv. 2). But if we would be saints in His kingdom in glory, let us give all diligence that we may be loyal subjects of His kingdom of grace, praying in heart and life, day by day, "Thy kingdom come."

## LECTURE IV.

*"Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven."*—

MATT. vi. 10.

As all intelligent prayer must be, so this prayer is addressed to a *Person*. Its opening words demand the recognition of this fact from him who offers it. As a *Person*, He to whom the prayer is offered is possessed of *will*—a will founded in His nature. The words of invocation require the acknowledgment of His personality, and the first petition suggests the glory of His *Name*—that is, of His nature, of Himself, who is to be "hallowed" by us. As that nature in itself is essentially perfect—perfect in every physical attribute and moral perfection—so the *will* which springs out of that nature must also be perfect. In it injustice, untruth, fallibility, or feebleness, can find no place. It is a *will* especially abounding in mercy, long-suffering, tenderness, for it is "our Father's" will, and He "is love." It is the only perfect will

in the universe. The carrying out, therefore, of its purposes and desires can only result to the highest well-being of the creature. Through all the intricacies and mysteries of its operation, by whatsoever agency it is furthered, and in whatsoever impenetrable darkness its designs are evolved, still those purposes that originate in the heart of infinite love, guided by the mind of infinite wisdom, and carried forward by the hand of infinite power, are "without" variableness and shadow of turning, "for the glory of God in the well-being of His creature—man." The Divine will may contradict man's desires; it cannot oppose his best interests. It may frustrate his schemes, but only to further his salvation. Therefore, as we are taught to hallow in our every thought the *Divine Name*, we must also hallow the *Divine will*—it is a part of that Name—in our thoughts, feelings, desires, prayers; learning day by day to say, "*Thy WILL be done.*"

In praying that God's will may be done, we are not to understand that man's will is to be suspended, but only that it is to be subordinated to God's will. Not that man shall not will, but that his erring will shall be harmonised with the all-perfect and unerrable will of God. As the sixth General Council assembled at Constantinople in the seventh century

decided, on the vexed question as to the twofold will of Christ; that, as His nature is twofold, Divine and human, so also His will is twofold,—that the individuality of the human will in Christ is not absorbed in, but perfectly harmonised with, the Divine; so this prayer teaches us, not that man's individuality of will should be absorbed or lost in that of God, but that it should become harmonised with His will, cheerfully consenting to it, howsoever it may oppose man's desires, hopes, purposes; and thereby we are to imitate our great human example, Christ Jesus, who, as man among men, was "in all points tempted as we are," yet whose constant "delight" was to suffer or to do His Father's will, not only on the mount of the transfiguration, but also in the garden of the passion, where, while the quivering humanity shrank crushed with the "agony," and He was forsaken—*alone*, sole communicant in that cup of sacramental suffering—He bowed His bleeding brow in prayer, and said, "O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt" (Matt. xxvi. 39). "Thy will be done."

*First, in the affairs of Providence, "Thy will be done."* There is no difficulty in this petition when God's will runs parallel with man's will. And often

men congratulate themselves that they are doing God's will, when really it is only their own will that they are doing, which happens to agree with God's will. The child finds no difficulty in obedience, so long as the command corresponds with its own dispositions and desires; but when the parental authority forbids the enjoyment of some pleasure, or commands some unpleasant duty, then appear the impatient tear and the fretful frown. So, when the currents of life run smoothly, when prosperity fills the sails of business, health flushes the cheek, and happiness cheers the household, the prayer soars lightly from the lip, "Our Father—Thy will be done." But when the Supreme Father interposes the authority of His paternal love and wisdom between man and the attainment of some cherished purpose of his life, or when He deprives him of that with which the strong fibres of his affections have been interwoven, then too often the spirit resists, while the lips feebly falter as they utter the unfelt petition, "Father—Thy will be done."

Yet this petition we are to offer day by day to Heaven. "When ye pray say," not such parts of the model prayer as may suit your own erring judgment or inclinations, but the whole prayer in its entirety. Not the lips only, but the heart is to learn

to say in every condition and circumstance of life, "Our Father—Thy will be done."

When sickness enfeebles the hand that should provide for the household wants, poverty enters the door, and the children cry for bread, the wrung heart of parenthood must learn to say, "Thy will be done." When the health fades from the infant cheek of the first-born of parental pride and love, all the music of the lisping tongue is hushed, and death has set his seal of silence upon the lips, from the loneliest hearts of that childless house must ascend, "Thy will be done." When the treasured purposes of life are broken off; when the vision of future years goes swiftly as a dream at opening day; when the fountains of prosperity are dried up; when, as though in mockery, every blessing is given save *the* one needful for the enjoyment of the others—health, and that through weary years is denied; when our own familiar friend forsakes us, and those in whom we have placed our sacred trust prove untrue; when those, over whom we have built our love and admiration as an arch of triumph, while they pass us on their noble way—

"The young and strong, who cherish  
Noble longings for the strife,  
By the roadside fall and perish,  
Weary with the march of life ;"

when the unity of married life is broken, the one is taken and the other left, the children are fatherless, the mother a widow; in short, when life's cherished hopes are smitten with despair, the wearied, crushed, broken spirit must still say, "Our Father—Thy will be done."

But why should these things be? Doubt challenges the will of God. Why are the purposes of life broken off and its desires defeated? God is all-wise, all-powerful, all-loving; why does He not control the course of events, and shape the plans of His providence to harmonise more nearly with man's desires, and to agree with his judgments? Nay, my brethren, but is it not certain, just because God is all-wise, all-powerful, all-loving, that "His ways *cannot* be our ways, nor His thoughts our thoughts;" that when infinite love, wisdom, and power are working for man's interest, they must frequently oppose man's judgment and desire. Instead, therefore, of looking with sceptical wonder upon those dispensations of God's providence, which so diverge from the track of human thoughts, and contradict the current of human desires, we ought rather to expect, indeed, to know that it must be so. Thus that common Christian creed that men profess so easily with the lips, *implies* events altogether inscrut-

able to man, though all are wrought in wisdom and equity. "Clouds and darkness are round about Him : righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne " (Ps. xcvi. 2). "God is light,"—eternal light,—to us only it is hidden light; hidden for a season, but presently to be revealed. "Now men see not the bright light which is in the clouds; but the wind passeth and cleanseth them" (Job xxxvii. 21).

Day by day we say, I believe thus and thus; but press that belief to its legitimate, practical issue, and how often the creed becomes a thing of words; the spirit revolts against the lips, the heart denies what the mouth hath spoken. Does not the secret of all this lie in man's selfishness and self-conceit? He is so set upon his own immediate gratification, and satisfied that he himself knows the best way for its attainment, that he becomes fretfully impatient of its development through a lengthened course of events, and sinks into complaining disbelief when his good is being wrought out by processes that he cannot understand. Thus, though he has Christian conviction and Christian desires, ay, and Christian creeds daily upon his tongue, and professedly in his heart, yet in the testing hours of life he seems to forget and forsake them all.



It is a sinful thing to say "I believe," if our *creeds* are only the confessions of our lips. It is a solemn thing to say "I believe," if these words represent the firm and intelligent convictions of our hearts ; for a short creed involves vast consequences, and God is pleased betimes to show the heart how much its principles imply ; and to test how deeply they are rooted, and with how much intelligence they are understood.

If the heart would learn to know the height and depth of a living faith in God, as well as the lips to say "I believe," then, indeed, there might be obscurity, but no perplexity,—we should be able to trust the purpose where we could not trace the plan,—the sorrowing soul would discover how great is the heritage of that promise, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee : because he trusteth in Thee " (Isa. xxvi. 3). Faith in God—a faith that soars where reason cannot climb—is the grand requisite to a cheerful agreement with His will. Thus this petition tests, while it encourages, our faith in God ; for he who with constancy of heart can breathe this petition from day to day, has discovered much of what the words, "our Father," mean ; whilst he has yet to be taught the first lessons of prayer—he is but on the threshold of the temple, who has not learned to say, "Thy will be done."

This petition has yet a deeper meaning ; *in God's purposes of grace*, we are to say, "Thy will be done."

God's will reaches deeper than the surface of man's life ; it penetrates even to its inmost seat. However, in offering this petition, the shallower thoughts of man may imagine it only embraces the external affairs and relations of life ; yet He who "knoweth what is *in* man," knows that there can be no real agreement between the will of man and the will of God, until the mind of man is brought into agreement with the mind of God by the renewing power of the Holy Ghost. The other law in our members also must be conformed to the law of our mind, when it is harmonised with the law of God ; then, when the strife of flesh and spirit, and of both against God, shall be done away, we shall learn a readier submission to the Divine will ; as S. Augustine says, "When the strife shall have passed away, and full concord be brought about of the flesh and spirit, the will of God will be done, as in heaven so in earth."

God's purposes with regard to man in his outward affairs, are subordinate to God's chief and primary purpose in the renovation and exaltation of man's inward, spiritual, and immortal nature : "This is the will of God, even your sanctification" (1 Thess. iv. 7) ; and that being "born not of blood, nor of the will of the

flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God " (John i. 13), we also "may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God" (Col. iv. 12). "*Thy WILL be done.*"

Consider how much this petition implies! It is, if used sincerely, the giving up of all your affairs into the hand of God, to dispose of them as He wills, so that if He gives or takes away you will still say, "Blessed be the name of the Lord;" but, further, it is to ask Him to transfigure your whole moral and spiritual nature, to make you "a new creature in Christ." God's will implies all this; but, as you say, "*Thy will be done,*" do *you* mean all this? Are you not this very day—although you have said this prayer—murmuring against some dispensation of God's providence, refusing to be comforted because of some loved one who is not? or are you not repining at some affliction which limits your enjoyment of life, or maybe cherishing a thankless and complaining spirit because the will of God opposes the gratification of some desire or the fulfilment of some project of ambition?

Gods says, "Be ye holy" (Lev. xx. 7). You say, in the solemn attitude of prayer, "*Thy will be done;*" but are you not knowingly resisting this will of God in your sanctification, by the indulgence of habits that you know are calculated to make your affections more earthly, your thoughts less Christlike—in short,

to estrange you from the favour of God and the communion of His Spirit? Take heed lest your prayers become a mockery of the majesty and mercy of Heaven; and with humble and serious thoughtfulness ask God, day by day, to help you to say from the heart, and in the life, "Thy will be done."

One step further. God's will is not only to be done *in* us, but *by* us. "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (literally, Thy will be done as in heaven so in earth). Men are agents by which God is pleased to advance the purposes of His will among men, especially as regards the diffusion of that revealed truth by which His will is made known. Therefore, by personal activity in every good and noble cause, that aims either to improve the physical or intellectual, and especially the spiritual, condition of men, and by exhibiting in life the principles of Christian virtue, every one who consistently prays "Thy will be done," must endeavour to do God's will as in heaven so in earth.

*Bengelius* says well, "Heaven is proposed as the normal standard to earth." The word *heaven*, in the original, in this petition, unlike that in the first petition of this prayer, is in the singular number. It is not "in the heavens," but "in heaven," which throws considerable doubt upon the interpretation that has been offered for this clause, that it is an allusion to

the power and dominion of God's will in the government of those material forces by which ponderous worlds perform their vast revolutions through the heavens, and age after age offer the homage of their ceaseless and splendid submission to the Eternal will. Doubtless, the regularity of the planetary system of the heavens does exhibit the authority and grandeur of God's will ; but since the submission of material worlds or systems is mechanical, involuntary, and unintelligent, they could scarcely be proposed as either example or standard to man ; rather, our thoughts are carried to "heaven," the home of those angelic spirits who, with enlightened intelligence and cheerful will, worship God day and night, and as His messengers of mercy or of judgment, go forth with swift and strengthful wing to execute His behests. So we are to propose their cheerful and intelligent homage to our imitation, and to ask God, as they do in heaven, so He may enable us to do in earth.

More and more, my brethren, may you understand the fulness of this petition ; and this you can only learn by thoughtful examination. More and more may you offer it from the heart ; and this you can only do by the cultivation of an increasing, a healthfully living, and, therefore, growing faith in God.

Then, indeed, God's high and holy will shall be done in your spirit, and you shall "grow up into Him who is your living Head in all things;" His will shall be done in all your affairs of life, "all things working together for *your* good;" and in life you will learn with increasing facility to subject and subordinate all things to the longing desire at all times to do His will, even as Abraham of old; respecting whom Archbishop Leighton observes, "how this will prevailed with him. He was a loving father, it appears; and upon Sarah's private monition, when there was no more, he could not find in his heart to put Ishmael out of doors, that was the son of the bond-woman; but upon God's command, he was ready to put Isaac to death, that was the son of promise."

"Thy will be done." "By this petition, if he venture to take it into his lips, the godless man condemns himself; with it the sufferer comforts himself, and is assured that through the gracious will of God all evil shall lose its hold upon the meek, who already have hope for their inheritance; by it the slothful man invigorates himself, and the self-willed rebukes himself; and by it the will of the spirit, which also conquers, prays itself through all the impediments of an opposing flesh to victory."\*

\* Stier.

## LECTURE V.

*"Give us this day our daily bread."*—MATT. v. II.

THIS petition commences what Calvin calls "the second table" of the Lord's Prayer. Hitherto, occupying, as is most fitting, the first place in the prayer, have been petitions relative to God, His glory and kingdom; now, in the second part, there are petitions for ourselves. The first division of the prayer says, "*Thy* name," "*Thy* kingdom," "*Thy* will;" the second part says, "Give *us*," "forgive *us*," "lead *us*," "deliver *us*." This is the true order of prayer—first, God and His glory; secondly, man and his interests.

In this second table, the first supplication is for DAILY BREAD. *Bread*—life's commonest necessity, that for which man first cares and craves. In eminent harmony with that religion which the Lord Jesus taught, this prayer is most *practical*. The Divine Founder of Christianity, who "took not on

Him the nature of angels, but took on Him the seed of Abraham," being "made like unto His brethren," could, therefore, fully sympathise with everything that is in, or really belongs to, man. He could say, with a comprehensiveness and depth of meaning such as the Roman poet never knew, "I am a man, and deem nothing that is human foreign to me." Therefore, that religion which our Lord gave, continually recognises and provides for all that is truly human in man.

They mistake greatly who imagine that Christianity is merely contemplative, visionary, transcendental. It is most practical. True, its promises reach away beyond time, its hopes are radiant with a mysterious glory, it discourses of eternity and immortal life ; yet its mission is to accompany man in the thoroughfares of business and in the fields of pleasure, to deal with everyday wants and life's commonest relations. Like the ladder of the patriarch's dream, it is "set upon the earth, and the top of it reacheth to heaven." So this model prayer, the true expression of Christianity, is raised in adoration of the Eternal Name, it asks the speedy coming of the kingdom of grace and glory, yet it begs for bread.

This word "bread" in Scripture frequently has a wider signification than that which we are wont to



assign to it,—not referring to bread exclusively, but to food generally. The Hebrew word for bread (לֶחֶם), in several passages of the Old Testament (e.g., Jer. xi. 19), is translated by the word “fruit,” and means, provisions or nourishment; so, does not this word *bread*, representing a primary and universal need, also suggest to us, by a common figure of speech, temporal blessings generally? Bread, the staff of life, is made representative of all the requirements of bodily life. Gregory Nyssen says, “Bread, including every bodily need.”

It is “*daily bread*.” The word here rendered daily (ἐπιούσιος) has provoked controversy in all quarters. As used by the inspired historians, it was a new word. It is not found in any of the earlier Greek writers; and is only used in the New Testament in this passage, and its parallel in S. Luke’s Gospel (chap. xi. 3). It is now generally understood to signify the *needful sustenance*, or that which is *proper for subsistence*. The phrase “*daily bread*,” therefore, covers the necessary supplies for our complex life; provision and nutrition for all our human needs; food for our most familiar appetites, supplies to satisfy the highest hunger of the human soul; the perishing food for a perishing nature, the divine aliment that alone can sustain an immortal life.

Thus all our needs are to be made known to God. None are so trifling as to be beneath His attention ; none are so great as to be beyond His power. The bread for which the little children cry in many hungry homes, or the complicated and widely-scattered interests of national affairs, are alike within the range of His regard. We are not to pray for superfluities, but for supplies. Not for the gold of wealth nor the purple of luxury, but for life's real needs,—“things proper for subsistence.” As S. Chrysostom says, “It is neither for riches nor for costly raiment, nor for any other such thing, but for bread only that He hath commanded us to make our prayer.” “Our Father” would not have His children fretting after such possessions as His good providence may have seen fit to withhold. He would not have life embarrassed with unsuitable cares, nor the devotions of prayer disturbed with unprofitable desires. As S. Chrysostom has again said, “He would have us to be on every hand unencumbered and winged ready for flight, yielding just so much to nature as necessity compels.”

It is true there are different stations in life, each having its own necessities. What would be proper and really necessary for one sphere of life, would be altogether out of place and mischievous even to

desire in another. Men are to pray for such things as are proper for subsistence, and that in the various spheres in which they are placed. Let the several classes of society not become envious and imitative of those which are immediately above them, but let each work and pray for such gifts and blessings as are suitable to their station. Let not the poor be envious of the rich, "for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke xii. 15). Let not the rich become the victim of artificial wants, forgetful of the poor man's need.

O ye rich ! Lazarus still lies at the gate. Let me put you in mind of your splendid inheritance of power to do good ; the noblest prerogative of your wealth. To dispense blessings, is, in dispensing, to receive sevenfold. Destitution and distress are cowering in many a hapless home ; unbefriended tears are rolling down many a woe-worn cheek ; no hand of kindness ever falls on many an orphan brow. Not only give of your substance, but open the fountains of your intelligent sympathy, and the benedictions of the widow's gratitude shall be your heritage, and the blessing of Him who said, "Whoso receiveth one such little child in My name receiveth Me" (Matt. xviii. 5). "Give us this day the things needful for the day."

Then, is not this exclusively the poor man's petition? Surely not. But what fitness is there in those who are possessed of regular, abundant, and secure incomes, praying for daily needs to be supplied, when all supplies are within their own power? But is not the protection of Providence the only pledge of property, and health the all-essential gift for its enjoyment? The moth frets the garment, the rust corrupts the treasure, the thief breaks through and steals. Earth's most reliable securities often fail; riches take to themselves wings and flee away. And what are the multitude of riches to man if his health be taken away, for "his life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat"? Let us remember that the humblest bread that is broken on the poor man's table, and the most splendid inheritances of a long ancestral line, are alike the gift of God, as well as the health which enables the son of toil to win the one, and the heir of fortune to enjoy the other: "Behold that which I have seen: it is good and comely for one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labour that he taketh under the sun all the days of his life, which God giveth him: for it is his portion. Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice

in his labour ; this is the gift of God " (Eccles. v. 18, 19). And these varied blessings may be all fittingly comprehended in the prayer for "daily bread."

Yet is there not a meaning deeper and more important still underlying these more superficial gifts? I have said that the word rendered "*daily*" is an uncommon word ; indeed, it seems to have been formed specially for this prayer ; but words are the representatives of thought. Surely, then, the Inspirer of truth intended to suggest some special thought by this special word. Common words at once suggest the meaning commonly assigned to them ; but a new word arrests special attention, that by careful investigation its full meaning may be reached. So the word in the original here checks the heedless utterer, and demands thoughtfulness. It awakens man to a recognition of deeper wants than those that belong to his mortal nature ; it speaks of all that is necessary for the subsistence of life in all the fulness of a complete humanity.

"Give us." But what are *we* ? what is *our life* ? what is needful for its many-sided being ? Are *we*—the individual *persons* for whom and by whom this prayer is offered—merely physical lives with temporal needs? Ages ago, the patriarch Job knew more than this. He said, "Thou hast covered *me* with skin and flesh ;

thou hast fenced *me* about with bones and sinews." Then the "skin and flesh," and "bones and sinews," are not the *me*—are not the person. They are but the "covering" of the person; the "fence," the frame-work of the living individual. "Covered *me*," and "fenced *me*;" that *me*, the living, conscious, intelligent, praying person, lies deeper than the mere shell of bodily life. Is it not a most feeble, inadequate, and even base apprehension of this comprehensive petition, which rests satisfied with its application to merely bodily needs? Man is to pray for himself; and yet in his prayer he often forgets that which is supremely and essentially himself in that which is subordinate and accidental.

Is there not an *intellectual* side of our being that "cannot live by bread alone"? The mind endowed with reason, judgment, memory, imagination, that "looks before and after," capable of investigating the records of the past, of contemplating the events of the future, of exploring the mysteries of science and solving the problems of philosophy—if it is to live healthfully, developing its varied faculties and powers, must be nourished with knowledge, truth, thought. Its Creator alone can strengthen it with natural vigour and supply it with suitable nourishment. "There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration

of the Almighty giveth him understanding" (Job xxxii. 8). So that it—this thinking mind—may be supplied with bread convenient for it, suitable aliment for our intellectual nature, we pray, "Give us this day food necessary for life."

Yet we must go further still to reach the inmost meaning, the very heart and central life of this petition, even to the profoundest wants of man's spiritual being. This word "bread" unites, by an ever-present figure, our thoughts with that bread which cometh down from heaven, the manna of the soul. The word here is linked with the ever-living word of Him who says, "I am the bread of life."

There is that in the human soul which can only be sustained by union with the Divine Source of all spiritual life. Man everywhere seeks God. He is life's highest necessity. A common want in human consciousness impels man to seek something that lies beyond and above himself. In weary and restless helplessness, through all the bewildered religions of the world, the orphaned heart of man cries for the Eternal Father. Until that want is supplied, man never truly lives; until by a living experience he learns the meaning of the noble words of St. Paul, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith

of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. ii. 20). The spirit of Christ alone can quicken this higher life within the soul, as the same Spirit only can, day by day, nourish it in more vigorous and strengthful proportions. Therefore, in every petition of this prayer we are brought to Christ, but in this clause we are taught to ask that He may give Himself to us,—the nourishment of the higher nature, the food of man's spiritual being, "the bread of life." Thus the deepest and most sacred needs of man's spiritual life are linked by an ever-suggestive figure with the commonest and most regularly-recurring wants of his bodily life. As though the Eternal Father would remind us, by the various necessities of the physical nature that force themselves upon our attention, of those deeper though more silent necessities of the soul. For what are these bodily appetites, but the shadows and symbols of spiritual need? They are the voices of the soul telling, with all the eloquent urgency of physical hunger, thirst, and desire, its inmost and immortal necessities. Not more certainly, if more swiftly, does the bodily system sink into decrepitude, decay, and death, if deprived of "the meat which perisheth," than do the energies of the spiritual nature become enfeebled and destroyed, if unsustained by Him who



is the "bread of life." Therefore, in this prayer for "*daily bread*," assuredly we are taught to ask directly for Him, who has said, "I am the Bread of Life," and who has promised, specially at His Eucharistic feast, to gladden with His presence and nourish with His grace all faithful souls; and at that Holy Communion and Supper of the Lord He feeds His Church, knits together the hearts of His children, and refreshes and invigorates their union with their Master and Lord. "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (John vi. 51). "Give us our *daily bread*."

Once more it is "*this day*" for the needs of which we are to pray. Christianity teaches the doctrine of Divine providence; and in our creeds we profess to believe in the ever-watchful control and guardianship of "our Father;" but how frequently our lives, by fretful doubt and anxious cares, dishonour and deny our profession! Has not our Lord Christ said in the very discourse of which this pattern prayer forms a part, "Take no thought" (*Μὴ μεριμνᾶτε*, i.e., let not your mind be divided with anxious doubts) "for your life;" even the lilies of the field, without the labourer's toil or weaver's skill, are

arrayed in an attire more splendid than Solomon's in all his glory; whilst the birds of the air, that watch over no anxious harvests, "nor gather into barns," are supplied from the unseen but bountiful Hand of Heaven. "Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?" Seek first Him who is the true bread, the Life of the life of men; through Him seek adoption into the Divine family, and the testimony of the Divine Fatherhood, and "all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. vi. 33). "A man too careful of danger liveth in continual torment; but a cheerful expecter of the best hath a fountain of joy within him." "Give us *this day* our daily bread."

But it is "*our* daily bread" for which we are to pray. Christianity tolerates no selfish exclusiveness in prayer, nor does it allow us, even in the eager cry for the supply of our own wants, to forget our brother's need. As we say, "Our Father," in confession of a common brotherhood, so we are to say, "*Give us*," in acknowledgment of a joint interest in the common needs of mankind.

Did we but learn the spirit of this great prayer, our little selfishness would be lost in the nobler spirit of Christian love. "But whoso hath this

world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" (1 John iii. 17.) He that "hath this world's good"; not *goods*, nor mere riches, but, literally (ἔχει τὸν βίον τοῦ κόσμου), "hath this world's life;" that is to say, hath all or any of these gifts or attainments that strengthen and enlarge the borders of life,—temporal possessions, intellectual accomplishments, or, above all, the gifts and graces of the spiritual life: "and seeth his brother have need"—need of what? Need of the "daily bread;" not only the perishing, physical bread, but "daily bread" in its most comprehensive sense,—the necessities of bodily life, the nourishment of the mind, the food to sustain the heart,—whoso hath any good and seeth his brother have need, yet, in selfish exclusiveness or indifference, "shutteth up his bowels of compassion, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" or how can he offer in spirit and in truth this Divine prayer that reveals the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of men? Therefore let them that "are rich in this world. . . be ready to give and glad to distribute" (1 Tim. vi. 18). Let the possessor of culture, or any fine gifts or attainments, make such discreet and generous use of his possessions that they may refine the life and quicken the

joy of others, thus making their daily bread the sweeter, more wholesome, and more abundant. In short, whosoever hath any "good"—any helpful or kindly thing that he can bestow, if it be but a word of sympathy or a smile of kindness, let him, if he would rightly use this prayer of prayers, remember his brother's need, and endeavour to relieve it.

But because the spiritual life of man is of highest moment, as brethren we owe to one another the spirit and deed of Christian helpfulness; not only "that no man put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way" (Rom. xiv. 13), but that we should "consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works" (Heb. x. 24). And how profound the obligation, how sublime the privileges, if, peradventure, we may be able to bring any hungry soul unto Him who hath said, "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst" (John vi. 35).

In conclusion, remember we are to say, "*Give.*" Thus we are reminded that we are alms-men upon the Divine bounty; that we owe the commonest, as well as the most essential, needs of our life to one God and Father of us all. "*Give!*" for it is the Father's finger that traces the green lines of promise

along the furrows of the spring-time, and that maketh the fields white unto the harvest. "Give!" for Thou art the Supreme Almoner of the universe; "The eyes of all wait upon Thee; and Thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest Thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing" (Ps. cxlv. 15, 16). "Give!" for, as S. Augustine says, "We are all, when we pray, God's beggars; we stand, or rather we fall prostrate, before the door of the Great Householder; we groan in supplication, wishing to receive something, and this something is God Himself. What does the beggar ask of thee? Bread. And what dost thou ask of God, but Christ who saith, 'I am the bread that cometh down from heaven!'" "Give us this day our daily bread."

## LECTURE VI.

*"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."*

—MATT. vi. 12.

THE parallel passage in S. Luke's Gospel (chap. xi. 4) guides us at once to the meaning of this prominent word "*debts*" (ὀφειλήματα), by supplying the word "*trespasses*" (ἁμαρτίας, sins), showing us that these "*debts*" allude to the moral obligations under which man lies to God. His law is the supreme and constant rule of human life. God's right is man's obedience. Every infraction of the Divine law is a violation of the Divine rights. To disobey is to incur a debt.

But these laws of God concern themselves not only with man's *outward*, but also with his inward, life; their tables are suspended in the most secret chambers of the soul. They take knowledge not merely of what man appears to be, but also of the "*thoughts and intents of the heart.*" They not only command

deed and speech, but also thought. They not only say, "Thou shalt not *do*," but also, Thou shalt not *desire* evil. As the spiritual privileges of this dispensation are vastly deepened, so are its obligations. The Great Author of this prayer, in that very discourse in which it occurs, penetrating below the act, seizes the disposition. He not only says, "Thou shalt not kill," but He forbids the contemptuous word, and the angry thought rashly conceived. Hatred, under any circumstances, He cannot away with: "I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you." The lawgivers of the former times said, "Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, Whosoever looketh upon a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." Yea, He makes all the law and prophets to hang upon a whole-hearted love to God, and to our neighbour (Mark xii. 28 *et seq.*). - Thus God's laws reach the deepest seats of life.

Is the faithful and full observance of these penetrating laws, God's right at man's hand? Who, then, has not defrauded his Maker? Thoughts are the soul's acts; God judgeth the thoughts. He is "a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the

heart" (Heb. iv. 12). Where, then, is the self-righteous man that can justify himself before Jehovah? Who can set aside this legal claim? Who can discharge this accumulated obligation? Bankrupt through this "debt," burdened with these "trespasses," crushed with such "sins," there is but one attitude for all,—helpless but hopeful supplication. "Our Father—forgive!"

Yet how commonly men "justify themselves," and endeavour to rest self-satisfied because they have not been guilty of any flagrant violation of the outward laws of life! Continually that inherent spirit of Pharisaism, of which I have before spoken, exhibits itself, refusing to acknowledge the evil, because that evil has not appeared in overt acts, forgetful that "all things are naked and opened to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do" (Heb. iv. 13); and that as a man "thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. xxiii. 7).

Not only in the sanguine moments of healthful vigour does the spiritual adviser meet with this ensnaring delusion, but as he stands by the solemn bed of the dying, offering ghostly counsel, urging the immediate need of the penitent prayer, "Father, forgive,"—even then, when the Judge is at the door, and the grave chill is freezing the languid currents of the blood, within an hour of the eternal doom, alas!



too often the faltering accents of the failing life are raised in self-justification. The lurking Pharisaism, in every age the same, begins to say, "I am not as other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers" (Luke xviii. 11).

Men and brethren, be not deceived: "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. iii. 23). The very first and foundational commandments, upon which the others rest their obligation, condemn every man. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself" (Luke x. 27). Who can say that to these commands he has rendered a perfect obedience? Who, for any one day of his life, has kept this law? Thus, if in no other way, we have all become debtors to the whole law: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point is guilty of all" (James ii. 10). "There is none righteous, no not one" (Rom. iii. 10). "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way;" but because "the Lord hath laid on *Him* the iniquity of us all" (Isa. liii. 6), we may come to "our Father," not in the pride of self-trust, but in the penitence of self-despair; not with the arrogance of the Pharisee, that boasted of self,

but with the contrition of the Publican, that saw only his own worthlessness, and with a spirit that dared "not lift up so much as his eyes towards heaven" (Luke xviii. 11, 12); so we must say, "Father, forgive."

This word "*forgive*" (ἀφίημι) signifies to set at liberty, to loose, to free from obligation, to emancipate, and from this verb is derived the word which is generally used in the New Testament to express the remission of sins or forgiveness. The year of jubilee was called the year of setting free, of remission, of forgiveness (ἐνιαυτὸς ἀφέσεως, Lev. xxv. 10, &c., *Sept.*), because the debts were cancelled, the captives were set free—the obligations were "forgiven." So possibly this word sprang up for yet nobler use and meaning in the New Testament.

*Forgiveness* of sins, then, signifies that gracious pardon which God, the Lawgiver, extends to man the law-breaker. It is remission of sins; the loosing of the soul from the bondage of its guiltiness; it is an act of the Supreme Judge by which the penalty due to the transgressor is remitted, pardon is pronounced, and deliverance is declared. Forgiveness is the putting away of our sins and their just penalty by the gracious pardon of "Our Father which art in heaven."

*How is this forgiveness to be obtained*, consistently with the integrity of these laws? How are the attri-

butes of the Eternal to be reconciled, in the dispensation of mercy and the just guardianship of Divine commandments? How is the law-breaker to be dealt with as a law-keeper, the transgressor to be treated as just? By the great law of Atonement, reconciliation through sacrifice—by the mediation of another, who says,

“Behold me, then ; me for him—life for life I offer.”

By one who was Himself sinless bearing the burthen, and bearing away the penalty due to the sinful. By a holy Mediator interposing between the loving but just Father, and the wilful and sinning child, and Himself at once vindicating the integrity of the Father's law, and discovering the greatness of His love. God is the loving and compassionate Father of man, “delighting in mercy,”—“ready to pardon, gracious, merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness” (Neh. ix. 17) ; but He is also the great World-Ruler. He has established a government, issued laws, commanded obedience, and “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do *right* ?” (Gen. xviii. 25.) As a wise and all-loving Father, He governs for the highest and ultimate good of all His children. Therefore man is under law as well as love ; law urged with the most solemn authority,—obedience to which is

essential not only for the well-being of the individual, but for the truest interests of the commonwealth.

Sin is not merely an offence against the holiness of God, but it is that hideous thing that wars with the interests of man, poisoning the fountains of purity and peace, withering the best sympathies and affections of the human heart, estranging man from his brother man, as certainly as from his God. "None of us liveth unto himself" (Rom. xiv. 7). Every deed, word, thought, carries its influence. A sin committed is a seed of sorrow, suffering, shame, it may be death, flung out into the world, bringing forth its harvest of mischief and misery, "in some thirty, in some sixty, in some an hundred fold." Man cannot sin alone. Whole nations have had to reap for ages the harvest of bitterness, of which one man sowed the seed; even as "Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin" (2 Kings iii. 3). And like "Baasha the son of Ahijah," who provoked the Lord to anger and "made Israel to sin" (1 Kings xxi. 22).

But, further, sin is the transgression of the law—it is lawlessness. Would the majesty of the law be vindicated, sin stamped as exceeding sinful, if it was forgiven merely on the repentance of the sinner? Seeing that sin is not simply an offence done against God, but also against the deepest interests of men,

would it be consistent with a just, not to say with a loving, regard to the well-being of all, that sin should be pardoned on repentance alone? Are the violators of human laws thus discharged from the penalty of their offences? But are God's laws less binding than man's laws?

Further, looking at God purely as "our Father," may He not require of His sinning child more than repentance? Does not the most loving earthly father deem it necessary to punish even a repentant child, not as a satisfaction to his own mind, but to enforce the principle of obedience to the parental authority; so the sufferings imposed upon the sinner, or freely undertaken by the Great Mediator on man's behalf, are not to satisfy the anger of God, but to sustain the integrity of His law, to confirm the principles of His government, to enforce His supreme authority, and at the same time to exhibit His "unspeakable love," "that God might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus" (Rom. iii. 26).

Is not all this accomplished by the mediation and sacrificial sufferings of Christ—Himself "the Lamb of God which *beareth away* (ὁ ἄρων) the sins of the world" (John i. 29).\* Does not this evangelical doctrine of atonement blend the most solemn require-

\* See also 1 John iii. 5—ἵνα τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν ἄρῃ; and 1 Pet. ii. 24, in connection with Isa. liii. 4, 10, 11.

ments of law and the most tender accents of love? Is not Calvary more awful even than Sinai? And yet it discovers such a scheme of mercy as shall quicken the pulses of a world "dead in trespasses and in sins," to "love Him, because He first loved us." "Herein is love" to charm this rebel earth into cheerful submission, and to awaken its grateful praises "unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood" (Rev. i. 5, 6); a love that teaches heaven the "new song,"—"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" (Rev. v. 12).

Moreover, we hold that the insufficiency of repentance to atone for sin, and the consequent doctrine of Mediation, are exhibited by the analogy of nature, the general constitution of the Divine government, and the history of the world's various religions. Bishop Butler argues,\* "that the whole analogy of nature removes all imagined presumption against the general notion of a *Mediator between God and man*." Even in human governments, repentance is deemed insufficient to compensate for public offences; "it is clearly contrary to all our notions of govern-

\* *Vide* the whole of Bishop Butler's chapter on the Christian Doctrine of Mediation.—"Analogy," part ii. chap. v.

ment." In the diversified religions of the world there has everywhere appeared a common consciousness of sin, and a common impression of the possibility of escape from the penalties due to the transgressor by the interposition of another; by sacrifice and propitiation. To quote Bishop Butler again: "By the general prevalence of propitiatory sacrifices over the heathen world, this notion of repentance alone being sufficient to expiate guilt, appears to be contrary to the general sense of mankind." In these cases, too, it was the innocent suffering for the guilty; so that against this part of the doctrine of our Lord's sacrificial suffering no objection can be brought that will not have equal force against "God's whole original constitution of nature, and the whole daily course of Divine providence in the government of the world."

The carrying out of this principle of deliverance through sacrifice, reconciliation by atonement, does not offend, but seems rather agreeable with, the "moral sense" in the affairs of life; while testimony and observation witness the welcome with which the men of all climes and circumstances receive the tidings of a voluntary Victim who has "offered one sacrifice for sins for ever" (Heb. x. 12). The ambassadors of Christ, who have carried forth the "great commission" to the uttermost parts of the earth,

attest how the disparted tribes and peoples of the world, with the most dissimilar characteristics of mind and body, dwelling in different zones, ruled by different habits, speaking different languages, civilised and savage, have paused, listened, responded to this evangel of redeeming love; in short, the cross has proved the touchstone of a common humanity.

We, too, have seen how this gospel of atonement has found its rapid way to the heart in the most serious and earnest hours. When the inmost life was stirred with those grave questions that comprehend man's relation to his God—when the soul forgot time in eternity, the present in that which is yet to be—then this doctrine was an evangel of peace. In the chamber of sickness, and by the bed of death, when the weary soul felt that it was done with life, that the world's sunshine, its green fields, its old familiar associations, were gone from it for ever, and there lay a dark, drear, unfathomable abyss—eternity—before, while sad memories brought back a guilty past, and the things which seemed long since left behind forgotten, came again to torture it—then, as we have spoken of deliverance through Christ's atonement for sin, we have seen the soul grow calm, trustful, joyous, and finally pass away, "more than conqueror," into the darkness which had become



light. Brothers, this doctrine of a free salvation by the merits and mediation of Christ is the great truth of Christendom ; in it the strong grows stronger, and death finds here its easy pillow.

This doctrine of salvation through a living faith in the "One Mediator between God and man" (1 Tim. ii. 5),—"forgiveness of sin" through the alone merits of Christ's atonement,—we urge upon you as the doctrine of Holy Scripture, the doctrine of the apostolic fathers, the doctrine of the Church of England, the doctrine of her greatest divines of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and the doctrine most agreeable with human consciousness.

*Holy Scripture* points us to one who "hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows," upon whom hath been laid "the iniquity of us all," "by whose stripes we are healed" (Isa. liii.). "For He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. v. 21). "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness, for the remission of sins that are past" (Rom. iii. 25). "And He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world" (1 John ii. 2). "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins" (Eph.

i. 7). For "Christ died for us" (1 Cor. xv. 3); not simply "in our behalf," nor "in our place," but (ὕπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν) "as an offering in consequence of our sins," "to deliver us from sins." \* This doctrine is declared both in the old and new covenants, through ages of sacrifice; from Abel's earliest offering up to the final victim—substance of all the shadows—up "to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel" (Heb. xii. 24).

*S. Clement*, whom *S. Paul* mentions (Phil. iv. 3) as a "fellow-labourer," says,† "Let us look to the blood of Christ, and observe how precious His blood is to God, which being shed for our salvation, has brought the favour (κάρην) of repentance to all the world." *S. Ignatius*, who, *S. Chrysostom* tells us, "conversed familiarly with the apostles," says,‡ "Ye appeared to me living not according to man, but according to Jesus Christ, who died for us (δι' ἡμᾶς ἀποθανόντα), that believing on His death ye might avoid death." And again he says,§ "our Saviour Jesus Christ suffered for our sins,"—τὴν ὑπὲρ ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν παθοῦσαν. *S. Polycarp*, who, according to *S. Jerome*, was "a disci-

\* *Vide Stanley on the Corinthians, in loco.*

† Ad Cor., Ep. i. Cap. viii.

‡ Ep. ad Trall., 2.

§ Ep. ad Smyr., vii.

ple of S. John," exhorts the Philippians: \* "Without ceasing, let us hold firmly to our hope and the pledge of our righteousness, who is Jesus Christ, 'who bore our sins in His own body on the tree, who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth' (1 Pet. ii. 24, 22), but endured all things for us (δι' ἡμᾶς πάντα ὑπέμεινε), that we should live in Him."

The *Church of England* in her *Second Art.* says, there "is one Christ, very God and very man; who truly suffered, was crucified, dead and buried, to reconcile His Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for actual sins of men." The office of the Holy Communion, in the Prayer of Consecration, teaches that "Almighty God, our heavenly Father, of *His* tender mercy, did give *His* only Son Jesus Christ to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption; who made there (by His one oblation of Himself, once offered) a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world."

In the twenty-fifth *Homily*, it is said, "Oh, the abundant riches of God's great mercy! Oh, the unspeakable goodness of His heavenly wisdom! (Rom. xi. 33.) When all hope of righteousness was past on our part, when we had nothing in ourselves, whereby

\* Ep. ad Philipp., viii.

we might quench His burning wrath and work the salvation of our own souls, and rise out of the miserable estate wherein we lay; then, even then, did Christ, the Son of God, by the appointment of His Father, come down from heaven to be wounded for our sakes, to be reputed with the wicked, to be condemned unto death, to take upon Him the reward of our sins, and to give His body to be broken on the cross for our offences."

The "judicious *Hooker*" says,\* "It is therefore true that our Lord Jesus Christ, by one most precious and propitiatory sacrifice, which was His body, a gift of infinite worth, offered for the sins of the whole world, hath thereby once reconciled us to God, purchased His general free pardon, and turned Divine indignation from mankind." *Bishop Pearson* says,† "Man who violated, by sinning, the law of God, and by that violation offended God, and was thereby obliged to undergo the punishment due unto sin, and to be inflicted by the wrath of God, is, by the price of the most precious blood of Christ, given and accepted in full compensation and satisfaction for the punishment which was due, restored unto the favour of God, who, being thus satisfied, and upon such satisfaction reconciled, is faithful and just to take off all

\* Eccl. Polity, Bk. vi.

† Expos. of the Creed, Art. x.

obligation unto punishment from the sinner : and in this act of God consisteth the *forgiveness of sins.*" *Barrow* (having shown that all man's works were unworthy of any acceptance) says,\* God was pleased "to provide a sacrifice in nature so pure, in value so precious, as might be perfectly satisfactory for our offences ; in regard to which obedience, God has become reconciled, and opens His arms of grace to mankind ; in respect to which sacrifice, *He* tenders remission to all men that, upon His terms (most equal and easy terms), are willing to embrace it."

Thus, my beloved brethren, we have seen how Scripture, the Church of England, apostolic fathers, and famous divines, the analogy of nature, the common constitution of the Divine government, all declare, illustrate, and confirm this doctrine of propitiatory sacrifice, salvation through atonement, deliverance from the penalties of sin by redemption ; suffer me, therefore, to urge upon you that you forsake all foolish trust in self, or the vain hopes that mercy will turn aside the course of justice. But justice is satisfied in Christ, and mercy is proclaimed to all believing with the heart on Him. Around that "fountain opened in the house of David, for sin and for uncleanness" (Zech. xiii. 1), "mercy and truth

\* On the Creed.

are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (Ps. lxxxv. 10). Here the infinitely loving Father stands, with unexhausted mercy, beseeching His sin-polluted children to come, pledging Himself that "though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa. i. 18).

But if mercy is obtained on such easy terms, is there no danger of the sinner making light of his sins so long as he knows there is full atonement?

Who shall deem those "easy terms" that demanded such a ransom, as the nameless sufferings of Christ? Yes, but "easy" for the sinner? Nay, verily, for the faith that is required in order to bring the sinner savingly to Christ, is not that fickle and superficial thing that talks lightly in mere acknowledgment of an historic fact, but that firm, I would almost say desperate, reliance in the Divine Mediator, that springs from the soul's deep consciousness of a guilty need, which bows down self in the "fellowship of His sufferings," who died for sins, and that binds it solely to Him who is "mighty to save." So in this pattern prayer our Lord supplies a test to prove whether we really and spiritually know how great is the extent of our debt, and wonderful the mercy required for its forgiveness, by teaching us that we

are to forgive men's trespasses against us, as we expect God to forgive our sins against Him: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us."

This petition at once excludes all antinomianism from our heart—the mere selfish dead faith that *confesses* but *disbelieves*. It is a test of the depth of our convictions and reality of our prayer. "Forgive, as we forgive." "*As* we forgive."

It is not for a moment to be thought, that our forgiveness of those that trespass against us, is, in any way, a meritorious cause of the forgiveness of our sins by God; that *because* we forgive, we *ought* also to be forgiven; for there is no proportion (as the original words suggest) between our "sins," or "debts" (ὀφειλήματα) to God, and our "trespasses" (παραπτώματα) against one another. As I have endeavoured to show, the Lord Christ alone is the meritorious cause of forgiveness; but in the latter clause of this petition, in this "*as*," we have a test given to ourselves, put into our own lips, by which to prove the sincerity of our own prayer for forgiveness; whether our petition is merely the language of our lips, or the cry of hearts conscious of their sin and longing for pardon. For if any heart has truly learnt its own sinfulness, how helpless it is to

deliver itself, how entirely it must depend upon the merits and mediation of another, who has freely borne the penalties due to its transgressions,—at such a moment, or under such feelings, it cannot fail, while asking the Divine Father to forgive its sins, to grant to any erring brother the ready pardon of his trespasses. “Our Father—forgive *as* I forgive.”

There is a test by which you, my brother, may try your own prayer. Have you forgiven all those that trespass against you? Think! no rankling feeling of revenge? no hatred? no malice? no smouldering embers of hostility, ready to be fanned into angry flame? If these and kindred feelings are expelled, and, under the conviction of your own great sins and great needs, you freely forgive others, while seeking forgiveness yourself of God, then, indeed, you have got the true spirit of prayer, and He will forgive you, *as* you forgive. But if, while asking forgiveness of God, you refuse forgiveness to man, then, indeed, your petition will remain unanswered, for it is not *prayer*; it may be the words of your lips, but it is not the language of your heart, and that only is *prayer*; “for if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses.”



Thus, necessarily this "*as*" grows into a *condition*, on which the answer of our prayers is suspended. "If ye forgive not, neither will ye be forgiven." If you have not learned to forgive men their trespasses against you, you are not in a moral condition to have your sins forgiven by God. Forgiveness, even through the merits of Christ, is only promised upon "heartly repentance," and such repentance springs only from a sincere conviction of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the unspeakable love of God; but any soul who has come to such a knowledge of its own multiplied and aggravated offences against God, and yet dares to trust in His forgiveness, cannot but feel how trifling are those trespasses from which it has suffered, comparatively with its own sins against God, and must delight to forgive, feeling how much it requires to have forgiven; therefore not by an arbitrary condition appended to God's promise of forgiveness, but by a moral necessity springing out of the very nature of things, "if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you."

My brethren, how little you have to forgive; how much you need to have forgiven! Oh, I charge you, remember how hourly your thoughts, words, or actions have grieved the good Spirit of God, and

accumulated that debt which you owe to Him, and which you ask to have forgiven ; and as you expect to be forgiven, forgive.

Remember that he who cannot use in sincerity the " Lord's Prayer," can use no prayer that is acceptable unto God ; but this prayer requires us to say, " forgive us, *as* we forgive,"—to make our forgiveness the standard by which we are to be forgiven ; therefore he who uses this prayer, unless he himself forgives men their trespasses, asks God, in the solemn language of prayer, to refuse him forgiveness. " Forgive us our trespasses, *as* we forgive them that trespass against us."

## LECTURE VII.

*“ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”*—MATT. vi. 13.

WORDS frequently exhibit a tendency either to turn entirely aside from their original meaning, or considerably to enlarge its sphere. In the course of its common use, a word is often brought into such close connection with some thought, nearly allied with that which the word itself primarily represents, that at length this secondary thought is gathered up also to share the use and divide the meaning of the original term; thus words come to have occasionally a dubious or double, and often a deteriorated, sense. So it is with the Greek word (*πειρασμόν*) in my text rendered by temptation—as also, indeed, with this its English equivalent, signifying originally to test, put to the proof, as applied only to an intelligent agent, and so was used to signify the various trials with which God is pleased from time to time to

prove His children, testing their fortitude and fidelity. But just because, alas! the moral nature so often yields beneath the proof, fails in the day of trial; because the test, trial, temptation, though having no evil in itself, so often finds evil in man, and becomes the occasion of bringing it out into activity, the word sinks into a lower stratum of meaning, and then conveys, along with the thought of trial or testing, that also of evil, through failure in the proving hour, or because it develops evil.

Is it not because of this secondary thought that has attached itself to the word temptation, that we hesitate to speak of temptations as proceeding from God, or to designate Him a tempter? But does not Scripture ascribe temptation to God, and that not only as permitting it, by allowing the evil one to present temptations to men, but Himself actually placing His most chosen servants in circumstances of peculiarly severe temptation? Surely it is so; and we should gain nothing in the interpretation of this confessedly difficult passage by overlooking or evading this fact, that God really and truly tempts man; indeed, it would be to lose everything, for it would be at the very outset to lose the truth. The only safe and honest course in interpretation is to recognise all the points of difficulty, however they may threaten

to perplex, and with whatever measure of success we may be able to deal with them; very often the seeming difficulties, fairly stated, will interpret themselves.

Now, in Gen. xxii. 1, it is said, "God did *tempt* Abraham." The Hebrew word there (נִסָּה) simply means to *try*, *test*, or *prove*. The same word occurs in 1 Kings x. 1, where it is said the Queen of Sheba came to "*prove*" Solomon. So also in Deut. iv. 34; where the word is represented by "*assayed*," and likewise "*temptation*." The same word occurs in several other passages also, in which God is represented, either in fact or in explicit terms, as tempting, *i. e.*, trying or proving His servants; the one case we have quoted, teaches plainly what the whole analogy of Scripture only confirms. Then the question arises, how is this passage (Gen. xxii. 1) to be harmonised with that in St. James i. 13, "Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man?" Does not the word temptation here carry in it that secondary meaning of which I have spoken, as often attaching to the word? Does it not mean more than simply trial or testing, and imply an admixture of evil with the trial, and that taking some hold, too, upon the moral nature of the tempted? Indeed,

does not the text suggest this, by the remarkable addition of the words, "with evil"? "God cannot be tempted *with evil*, neither tempteth He any man," *i.e., with evil*. In this sense, indeed, only he who is himself the Evil One can tempt men.

Satan tempts by presenting evil to the mind, by inspiring evil imaginations, by arousing evil passions, and thus in some degree, by his very temptations, deteriorating the moral nature, through disturbing the purity of the thoughts, and polluting the fountains of affection.

God tries, but Satan tempts. God has no dealings with evil; but in His wise discretion He sees fit to lead even His beloved ones into circumstances where their moral resolutions may be proved; where their superiority over worldly attainments, their submissiveness to His darker dispensations, their truth, purity, love, forgivingness, temperance, chastity, brotherly kindness, and the like graces, may be put to the test; and where, either through insufficient trust in Him, through feebleness of will, through defective control of the temper, through an unconquered spirit of selfishness—in short, through a leaven of the old corrupt nature still tolerated within, evil may accrue, instead of good being promoted through the further development of the moral nature,

in the establishment of its resolutions, the invigoration of its energy, and the exaltation of its purposes, by triumphing over the temptation. Thus God tempts by trying and putting to the proof.

Indeed, what is life but temptation? Every sphere presents its own tests. "Every condition of life and feeling is a temptation, a dangerous temptation; every condition of life and feeling is pregnant with a blessing or a curse." Are not riches a temptation? A temptation to sloth and selfishness, to luxurious ease and indifference to the wants of others?—to say to the soul, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry" (Luke xii. 19.) Is not poverty a temptation to covet the wealth of the affluent, or to repine at a lot in which daily needs remain unsatisfied? Is not health a temptation? When the vigorous currents of life flow through the system unimpaired by disease, the mind is clear and the hand is strong, is there not a danger of sympathy slumbering, and the heart, in the very regularity of life's tidal flow, forgetting to render one throb of grateful love to the Author of every good and perfect gift? Is not sickness a temptation? When the eye "mourneth by reason of affliction," the joy of life is poisoned at the fountain; in the long and lingering illness that

imprisons the sufferer in the chamber of sickness, or when the fires of fever glow in the system, burning the brow and parching the lip, through weary days and sleepless nights, is not the soul tempted to impatience and discontent? Are not the walks of trade and commerce beset with temptation? Is not the tradesman tempted by the mischievous rage for low prices, to mix, adulterate, and misrepresent, and thus to deceive, if not, indeed, actually to defraud, his customer? Is not the merchant tempted by an over-eagerness for gain, by "haste" for riches, and, amid the constant fluctuations of markets unhealthily stimulated, to venture upon hazardous speculations, or to attempt to enlarge the borders of his enterprise without the guarantee of substantial capital, and thus to gamble even with the property of others, and to fall into a grievous snare, for "he that *maketh haste* to be rich, shall not be innocent" (Prov. xxviii. 20, 24). Are not the higher offices of the state a temptation to their occupant to seek in them the gratification of personal ambition, the emoluments of place, the increase of power, or the favour of party at the expense of a strictly conscientious adherence to principles?

Are not the sacred offices of the Church a temptation? The daily functions of the Christian ministry,



so ordinarily thought to encircle their possessors with a peculiar protection, present temptations more than ordinarily perilous. The constant and systematic study of Holy Scripture, to which the Christian minister is necessarily called, requiring him to read it with the eye of the scholar, and to unfold its meanings by the scientific apparatus of criticism and interpretation—unless he carefully guards his spirit—endangers his devout reverence for its sacred teachings, tempting him to rationalise in respect of its holy mysteries, and to forget, in the legitimate claims of reason, the imperative demands of faith. It is a fact, surely not without its full-voiced admonition, that the various heresies that have arisen to vex, divide, enfeeble, and waste the Christian Church, through her eighteen eventful centuries, have originated chiefly with those dedicated to her sacred offices.

Further, in his capacity as pastor and preacher, is not the Christian minister beset with peculiar temptations? The very frequency with which, as a Christian *pastor*, he visits the scenes of affliction and death, and becomes familiarised with the tales of want and woe, may tend to deaden rather than deepen his susceptibilities of sympathy; and even in the chamber of sickness, or by the very couch of the dying, may

induce a merely perfunctory discharge of those peculiarly solemn duties of his office, the dispensation of ghostly counsel, and the administration of that Sacrament which is "the communion of the body and blood of Christ."

And are his dangers as a *preacher* a whit less imminent than those to which we have already alluded? The very regularity with which he is called upon to address large congregations at fixed times is calculated to excite a professional estimate of his duties, whilst the conspicuousness of his position may tempt him to adulterate the purity of his message with selfish conceits; to think as much of the opinions awakened concerning his discourse as of the moral and spiritual effects produced by it; and if he is followed by "the praise of men," to dim the splendid purpose of his noble embassy with the paltry desire of self-aggrandisement.

Surely, in no sphere of life are the temptations more numerous, subtle, insinuating, and perilous than in that of the Christian ministry; and in none is there a more imperative need of simplicity of spirit, reverence of mind, purity of heart—of prayerful reliance on Him who alone is "mighty to save."

Thus, my brethren, we have seen in every station in life, from those that appear most exposed to

those that ordinarily seem most secure, there are temptations. Indeed, life is one grand temptation. And it is necessarily so. Temptation is involved in the very idea of probation. Temptation is one of the chief forces of the disciplinary system of this life; one of the mightiest agencies in that educational process by which the Parental Ruler of the spirits of all flesh seeks to qualify man for a life beyond life. For by education, in its truest sense, is meant, as one of the most eminent of modern writers has said, "That mighty system of central forces hidden in the deep bosom of human life, which by passion, by strife, by temptation, by the energies of resistance, works for ever—resting not day nor night, any more than the mighty wheel of day and night itself, whose movements, like spokes, are glimmering for ever as they revolve."—(*Suspiria de Profundis*.)

So it is, up from very childhood through the ever-changing scenes and circumstances of human history, that the "mighty system of central forces, deep hidden in the bosom of human life," are stirred to activity, the manhood is educated and the character is formed. And does not this afford some explanation of an otherwise confessedly difficult fact, that "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth?" (Heb. xii, 6). Thus

the loving Father, by this education of trial and suffering,—not necessarily of the body, but it may be of intellectual doubts and unrest, or of any bitterness of the heart,—excites the prodigal wanderer to seek the recovery of his sonship; and the son to strive after higher qualifications that he may be made “meet to be partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light” (Col. i. 12).

And is it not by this same process of education, the education of temptation, that God has developed in every age the faith, constancy, fortitude, purity, love, self-government, magnanimity—in short, the whole catalogue of sanctified virtues? Was it not through such an education, representing every type of temptation to which the human soul can be exposed, that the heroic character was developed in those nobles of Hebrew story, “who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens,” and whose splendid muster-roll is inscribed in the 11th chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews—a monumental tablet graven by the finger of inspiration, and which, wherever this gospel is preached, shall

be erected for a memorial of them? So, my brethren, in this disciplinary life it must be by a like education that our character is to be formed and strengthened. As gymnastics to the physical life, invigorating the nerves and strengthening the muscle, so the thews and sinews of the moral and spiritual life are to be developed by temptation.

But here arises at once the question, If life is such a series of temptations, and they are of such service in the development of the inner life, why are we taught to pray, "Lead us not into temptation"? I have already said that temptation, as given by God, though having no evil in itself, often excites evil in man, or leads him into circumstances through which he yields himself as the victim or agent of evil; but the renewed and sanctified heart revolts from contact with, or even from the very neighbourhood of evil, shunning it, avoiding it, deprecating it; for, as two bodies in positive electrical conditions repel each other, so good and evil are mutually repellent; therefore, as the renewed soul remembers that in the severer warfare with temptation many an earnest heart has been grievously betrayed, many a fine purpose has been spoiled, and, peradventure, carrying itself the disfiguring wounds of dishonoured conflicts, and the bitter memory of their shame, its

own natural and inmost longings find true translation into words of prayer in the petition, "Lead us not into temptation."

But I have said that the "Lord's Prayer" is suited to and intended for the use of the little child as well as for the "old man, silver-haired;" for the most ignorant and erring as well as for the most sage and saint-like. So this petition, "Lead us not into temptation," ought to be among the earliest utterances of the soul that has been newly awakened to pray. Such a one, it is true, may not have felt that inward repugnance to evil, and dread of it, which would suggest this prayer, nor possibly such emotions as would even sanction it; and in his first eagerness after truth and goodness, might rather be inclined, in a mistaken spirit of fortitude, to court a temptation, intending in it to win a triumph; but surely he must be taught, as he more especially requires to learn, to cherish a spirit very different from that of rashness or self-sufficiency.

Christianity awakens a deep mistrust of self, and that fear of temptation which springs from a consciousness of manifold infirmities, and the recognition of the "exceeding sinfulness of sin;" it promotes the humility of spirit which originates in the true self-knowledge that Christianity alone can give.

The natural tendency of man is to repudiate and scorn a spirit of self-depreciation and lowly-mindedness; and ancient heathenism deemed it despicable and debased; but the genius of Christianity came to re-illumine and re-order the darkness and confusion of the moral world, and in doing this, added a new attribute of character to the catalogue of human virtues, as it has added a new word to the vocabulary by which to designate it; and now "lowliness," or "humbleness of mind" (*ταπεινοφροσύνη*), is one of the truest graces of human life; hence this "Lead us not into temptation" is the deeply-fitting expression of Christian devotion.

Therefore, let "the babe in Christ," or even him who is yet only making his first approach to Christ, be taught to use this petition, that at length in and through its use he may rise to the knowledge and enter into the experience of that lowly-mindedness and self-mistrust of which it is the most appropriate utterance. For this prayer, in the comprehensive variety and exquisite harmony of all its petitions, is at once a manual of Christian instruction and a model of Christian devotion. It is given to teach the true spirit, and also to afford the suitable expression of the humbly prayerful soul.

Temptation is perilous, and though we may have

passed through some of its conflicts unvanquished, yet it was not of ourselves, but by the sustaining companionship of One, who, "in that He Himself hath suffered, being tempted, is able to succour them that are tempted" (Heb. ii. 18). The temptations in which we have been so upborne may have tended to develop and strengthen our Christian principles; but just as the difficult and dangerous defile through which the traveller, only by the timely aid of another, has been able to thread his hazardous way, may have given him steadier nerve and stronger muscle, yet when he turns to look upon the perils he has passed, it is with a shuddering thankfulness; so, as we "remember all the way which the Lord *our* God hath led us, to humble us, to prove us, and to know what was in our heart," we ought to feel the humility of a spirit which, while grateful for its deliverances, has learnt to pray from its inmost depths, "Lead us not into temptation."

*Young men*, suffer me, with a brother's sympathies and a minister's fidelity, to say some words to you. When God may be pleased to lead you into temptation, as He certainly may, then, "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong" (1 Cor. xvi. 13); but I charge you, take heed how, of your own accord, you enter, even with pure though



mistaken purpose, into scenes of sin, or into any atmosphere of moral pollution. The common excuse is, "We wish to see *life*." Life! My brother, depravity is disease, evil is corruption; to call such *life*, is only the gloss of an artful delusion. You can only "see life" where you see truth, purity, goodness.

If we wish to see physical life, we seek it where the pure airs of heaven hue the cheek with health, and the exercises of honest industry sinew the limbs with symmetry and strength; not where life lies marred and crippled with the loathsome disfigurements of self-entailed disease. Let the physician go, and God protect him! on his benevolent mission into the infected region where the deadly epidemic is doing its ghastly work upon the sad and weary sufferers; but idle curiosity may not venture there. And remember that evil has its contagion, and sin circulates the subtlest infection. For a time, it may be, you might move with a seeming impunity in the path of the Destroyer, for temptation does not ceaselessly fret the spirit nor fever the blood, but concentrates its power while giving time for heedless dalliance, until it comes with swift and silent sorcery upon the life, and enchants the will—resolution falters in the strange delirium,

"Then, in a moment is put forth the charm  
Of woven paces and of waving hands,  
And . . . . he lies as dead,  
And lost to use and name and fame."

But if through the furnace, heated even seven times hotter than its wont, you pass unscathed, through the gracious, protecting presence of "One like unto the Son of man," yet surely upon the garments of the tempted soul the smell of the fire will have passed. Remembrance will demand its retribution in after years. There will be frescoes on the walls of memory that he cannot obliterate, ghostly recollections that he cannot lay, moving to and fro in the haunted corridors of thought. What would many a troubled spirit give to blot from remembrance scenes and stories that, in his eagerness to "know life," he too rashly sought! Young man, "keep thy heart with all diligence" (Prov. iv. 23). "Blessed are the pure in heart : for they shall see God" (Matt. v. 8).

Dally not with temptation. Do not, I beseech you, hazard the integrity of your character, nor trifle with the purity even of your thoughts.

"Be wise ; know what to leave unknown."

In teaching you to say, "Lead us not into temptation," has not the Lord Christ taught you to shun temptation? Is there any one of you who dares to

say, "My life is such that I cannot or will not use the Lord's Prayer"? If so, you put yourself outside the pale of all prayer; if not, and you use it, then your own devotions forbid you to enter into the ways of evil; for it is but a mockery of God to say "Lead us not into temptation," if you lead yourself into its ensnaring paths. Again, I say, dally not with the serpent sin, idly imagining you have an enchantment by which to subdue its power or neutralise its sting; the charm may fail or be forgotten in the perilous crisis, then follow the poisoned fang and crushing coils.

There is not one of us who has been led into the depths of temptation, or who of ourselves have gone into those spheres of fascinating allurements, where the excited blood has bounded with eager haste through the shaken frame, where all the impassioned susceptibilities of life have been quickened, and the resolute will has felt the growing enchantment,—even though, through a desperate determination, and a quivering hold upon the Mightier One, we have struggled through unfallen and unconquered,—that would not yet, from his inmost experience, say in prayer, "Lead us not into," as he would say in life, "shun temptation," "but deliver us from evil."

Thus, this petition for freedom from temptation rises up into that yearning utterance which closes

this pattern prayer, compacting all its petitions into one; in short, gathering up the language of universal prayer into the one impassioned cry of humanity, "Deliver us from evil."

But this closing clause of the Lord's Prayer, "Deliver us from evil"—*ῥῦσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ*—is not surely, as it has been suggested, a cry merely against the Evil One, a petition only for deliverance from the wiles of Satan. Does not such an interpretation narrow unwarrantably the comprehensive completeness of this final petition? "Deliver us from evil" is the crowning word of this prayer. For evil is the cruel bondage under which "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together" (Rom. viii. 22). Deliverance from evil is full redemption and release. The Redeemer, therefore, makes the final petition of His pattern prayer a cry that His redemptive work may have its complete accomplishment. That from evil, many-shaped, whencesoever proceeding, or howsoever presented, there may be full and final deliverance.

But Satan is not the sole source of temptation to evil; for S. James says, "Every man is tempted when he is led away of his own lust, and enticed" (chap. i. 14). The Teacher who gave this prayer taught that "from within, out of the heart of men,

proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within and defile the man" (Mark vii. 21-23). If, therefore, we would be delivered from evil, and our Lord taught us so to pray, we must not only ask to be delivered from Satan, but also from self. We have been too unmindful of the evil that is in ourselves, and through that subtle self-righteousness, the lurking Pharisaism of which I have before spoken, that ever justifies itself; we have been too ready to imagine that all the evil from which we suffer comes from without, and springs from some common Tempter; and truly there is such an Adversary "who goeth about" to destroy (1 Pet. v. 8); but is there not also another tempter within, by which man is "drawn away of his own lust"? Have we not often readily accused Satan, when we should more justly have condemned self? Have we not ascribed sin, and sorrow, and shame sometimes to "that wicked One" who is the evil person, when we should rather have recognised the natural operation of that ruinous thing which is the evil principle? and from which, whether it springs from Satan or self, from "the world, the flesh, or the devil," He who taught us to pray, taught us to seek deliverance of

“our Father,” in the devout use of that final petition, which is the climax of this prayer. Deliver us not alone from the devil, but “Deliver us from evil.”

*Alford*, indeed, says very strongly, “The introduction of ‘the evil one’ would here be quite incongruous, and even absurd;” while *Stier* eloquently urges that this Lord’s Prayer is “The liturgy of liturgies, and here reaches its sublime close, which through the deep lowliness of the believing ‘deliver us!’ immediately passes into the heavenly doxology, ‘Thine is the kingdom!’ And just at this point must the Conqueror confer the honour upon His vanquished enemy of naming him with his threatening power? Are the believing children, already redeemed, for ever to be subject to the contumely, at the end of every private and common prayer, of mentioning him? Let him believe this who can, our inmost sense of holy propriety recoils from it.”

Beloved brethren, let us therefore pray to be delivered from *the evil*; for in whatsoever shape it may appear to us, or from whatsoever source it may arise—in the seductive subtleties of Satan, in the perverted customs and false maxims of the world, or in the treacherous corruptions of our very selves—evil is our direst foe, at war with all the nobilities of life, with everything that is brave, pure, sincere, unselfish,

loving ; in short, Christ-like. "Our Father," "deliver us from evil."

These words are the summary of this whole prayer, as it is a summary of the whole gospel. Is it not evil that has alienated and disinherited man from his Divine Father, and which impedes his reconciliation and re-adoption? Is it not evil that estranges man from man, and makes it difficult to say "*our* Father"? Is it not evil that dishonours the Divine *Name*? Is it not evil that stays the coming of His kingdom? Is it not evil that resists His will on earth? Is it not evil that pollutes and impoverishes the supplies of daily life? Is it not evil that has induced those trespasses through which man needs "a Saviour and a great one"? "Our Father, deliver us from evil." And the Deliverer has come, and by the stupendous forces of redemption, with silent but sublime certainty, He is ejecting the evil and establishing the good, relieving this groaning creation, enlarging the dominion of that kingdom in which He shall reign whose right it is, when there shall be "a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness;" "yet of that day and hour knoweth no man," but it shall come in all the glory of millennial promise. Let us look to it that we enjoy the first-fruits now of that great Harvest-home of Time.

Ask, with obedient trustfulness and fervent importunity, the infinite and ever-loving Father, and you shall be delivered from evil, from its penalties and from its power. First pardoned through His Son and renewed by His Spirit, and as you seek in child-like earnestness and simplicity to "know Him whom to know is life eternal," you will realise a daily renovation (*ἀνακαίνωσις*, Rom. xii. 2, Titus iii. 5), an increasing mastery over evil, and growth "up into Him who is your living Head in all things," "until the end come," and the faltering accents of earthly prayer shall expand into the exultant strains of heavenly doxology, as He, of whom is the power, shall bring you into His kingdom and glory.

THE END.



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